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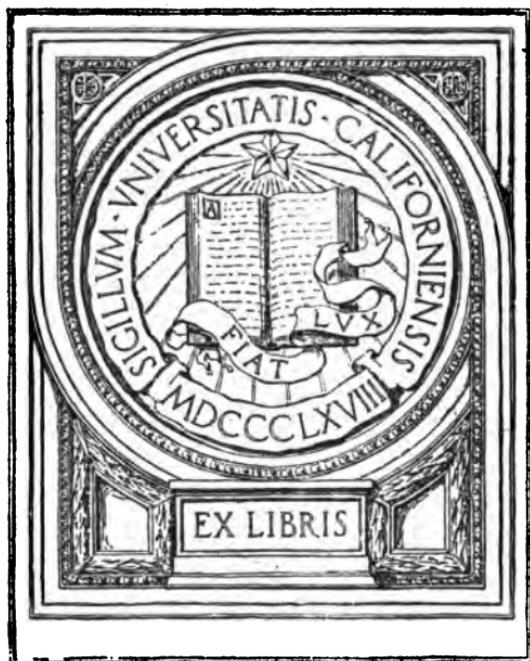
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**Melmoth the Wanderer**

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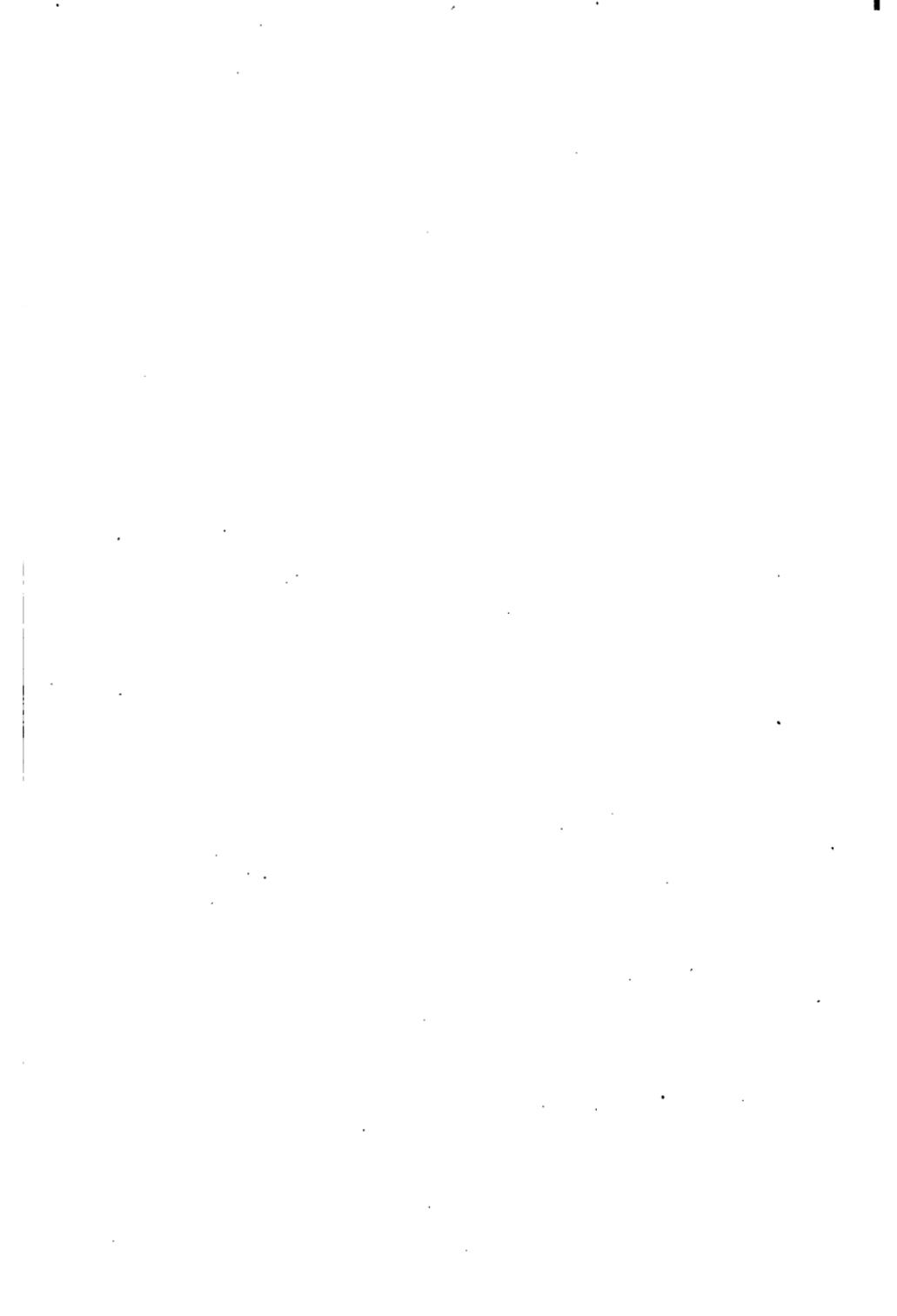
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*American Dramatists Series*

# MELMOTH THE WANDERER

*A Play in Five Acts*

BY

GUSTAV DAVIDSON

and

JOSEPH KOVEN



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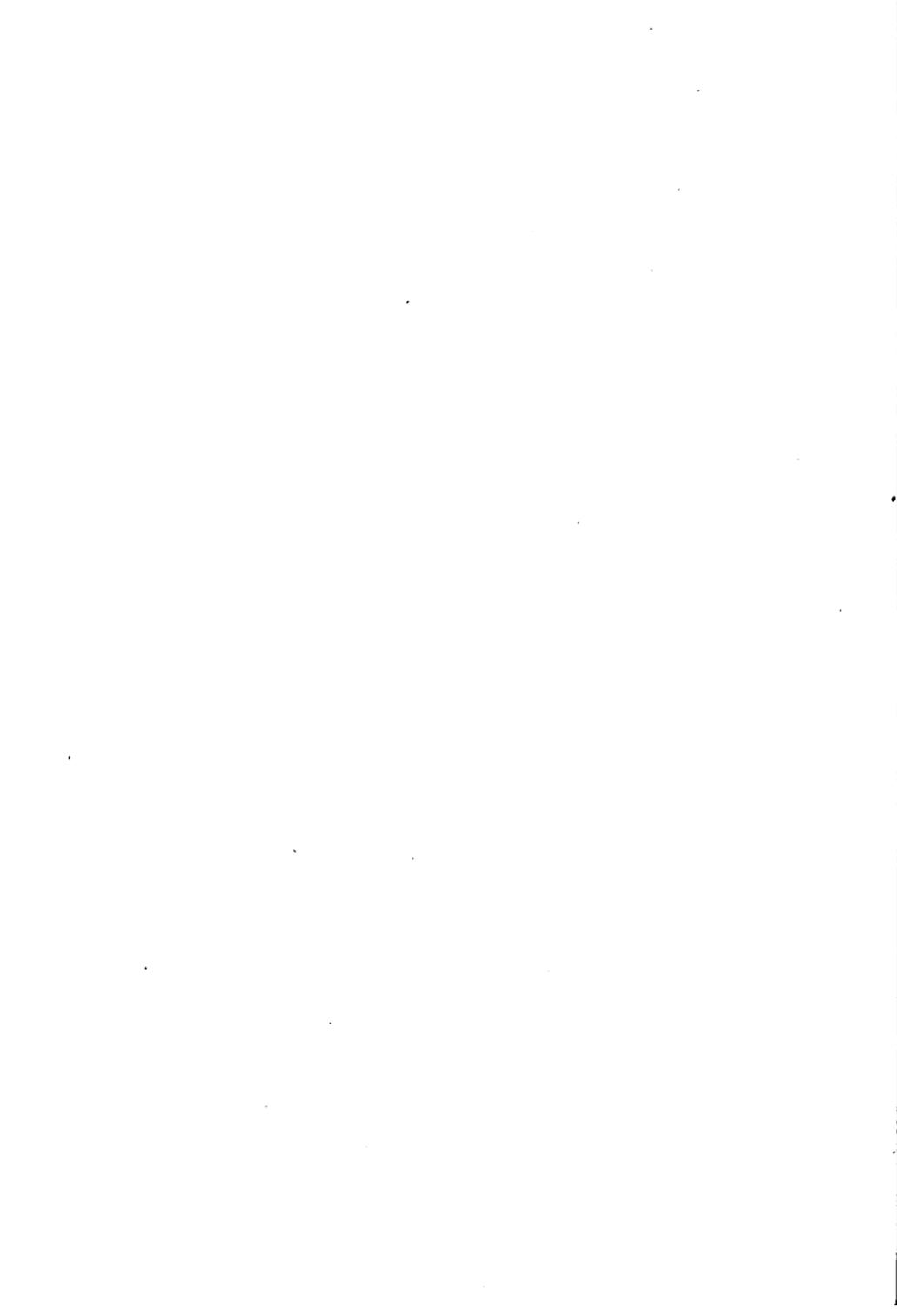
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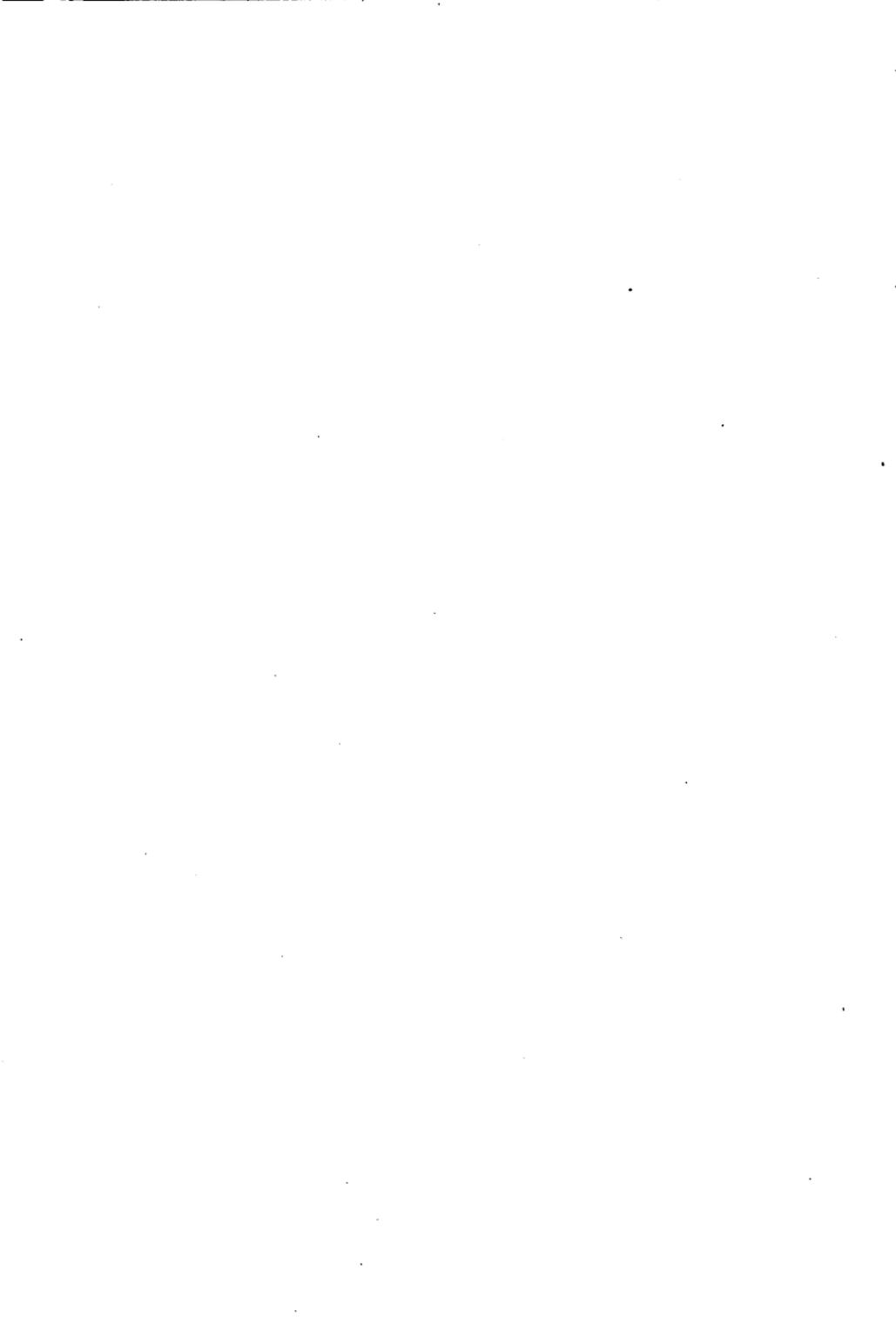
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MELMOTH  
THE WANDERER



PROLOGUE

*Satan.*

*Melmoth, a Monk.*

*Two other Monks.*

## THE PLAY

*Satan.*

*Melmoth, King of Elsmere.*

*Kemiss, the "Old Duke."*

*Esmund, his son.*

*Pellas, the Lord Chamberlain.*

*St. Francis, his son (Later, Marquis of Lode.)*

*Toussan, a confederate of St. Francis'.*

*John, known as "The Pretender," rightful heir to the throne.*

*Royce, Dohlgrin, Brabant, Berkeley, Officers in the King's Army, and friends to John.*

*Splinters.*

*Steele, De Forest, Edwin, Courtiers.*

*A Poet.*

*A Painter.*

*A Jeweler.*

*Another Jeweler.*

*A Physician.*

*Dolora, daughter of the "Old Duke."*

*Cedrielle, her companion.*

*Margaret, a waiting-maid.*

*Mickle.*

*Spirit of Satan, Ambassadors from foreign parts, lords, ladies, courtiers, masqueraders, soldiers, messengers, guards, attendants, musicians, commoners.*

*Scene of Prologue—Monastery.*

*Scene of Play—Elsmere.*

*Time—Eighteenth Century.*

## PROLOGUE

*Bells toll the fifth hour before rising of the curtain. Then discovered a high Gothic Chamber, hexagonal in shape, in a Monastery of St. Benedict. To back of stage, on the hypotenuse, two long stained glass windows open on vertical hinges; they afford a view of the heavens, which is of the after-sunset glow, and darkens as scene progresses. Rude furniture. Walls adorned with dusty old paintings of religious character. To right, down stage, is a stand with a bible open upon it. To left, in line with it, is a long narrow table upon which there are several tapers, a number of odd volumes and manuscripts. Two Monks are discovered. First Monk, with a lighted taper in his hand, is before a shelf of books set up in a dark corner to the right, up stage. Second Monk is in the act of lighting candles on the table to left.*

*First Monk.* Tell me, brother, what is the word of the Lord against those who betray their office in the Church?

*Second Monk.* Betray their office in the Church? Why, is there any cause that you do ask me this?

*First Monk.* I fear me much there is.

*Second Monk.* What do you mean?

*First Monk.* You know, brother, there are those in the lap of the Mother Church who make nothing of the observances of the most solemn rites—

*Second Monk.* Well?—

*First Monk.* Who question the soundest principles of religion; whose faith's grown so sick, they've thrust aside the holy word of God and turned to doubt and argument. (*Pause.*) One of such a mood, brother, is there among us!

*Second Monk.* You say, "among us?"

*First Monk.* Ay.

*Second Monk.* But who is he? I'll speak soft. Tell me, who is he?

*First Monk.* Have you then not observed—?

*Second Monk.* Brother Melmoth?

*First Monk.* Thou hast it there! Men have wandered from the sight of God, but none so far as he.

*Second Monk.* I have observed him. What you tell me is confirmation of my suspicions of him lately. There is indeed a terrible change come over him. His face has taken on the color of his doubts; it is pale. I remember being near him to-day at matins. He did not join us in prayer, nor did I fail to note how tight he had his lips compressed, and how he looked down upon the assembled brotherhood with that full and deliberate scorn that should make us tremble for his soul. Last night he failed to vespers.

*First Monk.* Ay, why was that, tell me?

*Second Monk.* Was he not sick? That was his answer, no?

*First Monk.* Sick, ay, in the spirit—not in the flesh. When I repaired to his cell I found open before him certain forbidden readings wherein he was engrossed. I addressed him, and attempted to divert his attention from them; but he turned upon

me angrily and would have struck me. It pained me mightily to see him so abandoned. He needs prayer and penance.

*Second Monk.* Proof more than prayer, brother; and that he'll find in himself, not through us. Reason cannot create our faith: it only sustains the faith already in us. Melmoth is a wise man, but one who looks not to that depth where simplicity resides and reflects the grand spirit of God. There he is now.

(*Enter Melmoth.*)

*Melmoth.* Heh, they speak of me. Always they speak of me; I wot, in faith, not well. They hate me. They are jealous of me. They fear my learning, yet do they admire that fault in me which they dare not themselves possess. Heigh ho, brothers! Good faith! (*To First Monk.*) What is on your mind that is not upon your face? Heh, I can read your visage so, I pity you. (*To Second Monk.*) And you, you have lips, use them to advantage. Speak not of me ever. Use your lips for prayer.

*First Monk.* *Thou* hast more need for prayer, Melmoth.

*Melmoth.* Not I, upon my soul, not I! To pray is to beg, to flatter, to lean against, and that hath a selfish end to it.

*First Monk.* Why art thou not grateful for what thou hast?

*Melmoth.* (*Contemptibly.*) What have I? What *thou* hast! Satisfaction therein would be sin. Pooh! You are asleep, asleep! I ask nothing—nothing of Him. Whatever I crave, I seek to get without His aid; if he would deny me, let Him, let

Him!

*Both Monks.* O, words unbecoming and graceless! Where is your faith, Melmoth? Or are you lost to reason?

*Melmoth.* Nay, won to reason. And faith? Fled with the coming of reason. Where's tyranny greater than the tyranny of faith? This stops up the peep-hole to understanding; this makes us small, weak, humble, when we should be mighty in the glory and consciousness of self; afraid, when we should be bold; slack, when the energies of this universe are ours to use or to neglect; dependent, when we have it in ourselves to wipe out the total impress of reality and make creation a blank! Why are we here, eh? To break up the monotony of His eternal time, tell me! Nor are we given to know what fools he makes of us. Were He not happy in man's perversity, He would not have fashioned us so imperfect, so remiss. He toys with us; creates temptations and then sets His Canon against them; frightens us to make us fear Him; blinds us to make us worship Him. He gives and scorns our pleasures, for seldom is it that the last tear shed at great happiness is not the first to fall at great sorrow. Why do you stare at me with mouths open like choked cats? You are alarmed at the truth? Know you not we are nothing better than monkeys dancing to a fool's fife?

*First Monk.* O sacrilege!

*Second Monk.* Good brother, question not the wisdom of the Lord. The work of His hand is beyond imitation and the work of His mind beyond our ken.

*Melmoth.* Excellent, upon my soul!

*Second Monk.* The Lord it is whose righteousness endureth.

He alone can judge us in our ways.  
All which is, is right, for He ensureth  
Truth and Justice to th' eternal days.

*Melmoth.* (*Sarcastically.*) Amen! amen! that's perfect assurance!—

Wherein see you the judgment of the Lord  
That's held to be unerring and forever,  
When right's still at the mercy of the sword,  
And wrong prevaieth mightier then ever?  
Nay, where's this grand and everlasting Master  
Who'd keep us bound in ignorance and fear;  
Who'd make us blind to make the struggle vaster  
And never bring the resurrection near?  
Where is this God you speak of? Above, below,  
within, without,—where?

*First Monk.* Mother of Christ, defend us!

*Melmoth.*—Nowhere, nothing!

*Second Monk.* God's within ourselves, that's all the story.

Man forsaking Him, forsakes himself;  
He that looks to Heaven sees the Glory.  
He that looks to Hell sees hell itself.

(*Bells toll.*)

Come, brother, here's vespers.

*Melmoth.* Take to your prayers and trash!

*First Monk.* Heaven keep him.

*Melmoth.* Ay, there's light and glory above us,  
but 'tis not for Man. Why does that selfish God  
who means to share Heaven for aye, give us a  
glimpse of that Heaven to make us discontented  
here on earth? (*Exeunt both Monks.*) Unreal are  
thy dreams, oh man! And what is thy life—the

profit of thy being?—A shuttle, a shuttle, and a broken weft-thread. (*Pause.*)

For me the light of life is o'er.  
 The world itself and all the world can yield  
 Holds out not anything my senses crave.  
 The bonds of sympathy that make us one  
 With th' incorporeal spirit o' the earth  
 And win us into the circle of the universe  
 Have dropped from me. The thought of pleasure's  
 palled.

And even melancholy, sweet self-torturer,  
 Intellect's most cherished companion, (*Approaches*  
 Brings no longer solace. I am lost *window.*)  
 Beyond a faltering thought, beyond recall,  
 To faith in life and life's availing ends. (*Looks out*)

Ye stars! Ye everlasting orbs and circling worlds  
 That cluster round in mystic constellation  
 And string out to the last echo of infinity,—  
 What are ye?—  
 Unknowing and unknowable? Alike  
 Denied that deep and all-inquiring gaze  
 Which questions why of One who will not say  
 And scorns in very silence? (*Star shoots across the*  
 Oh! And what art thou, *sky.*)  
 Showing for a moment like a thought  
 Caught up in a dream, then off again  
 Into the staggering space of endlessness  
 From whence thou hast arisen?  
 Art thou the emblem of a fate encompassed?  
 Does thy light now vanished speak of worlds eclipsed  
 And worlds new born, with days on days and  
 morrows

Upon morrows, snatching up the thread of time  
 And spinning it unwearily unto  
 Everlastingness? Oh me! Oh thought!  
 (*A moment overcome.*)

If I could wring the riddle of the spheres  
 And know of all—the wherefore and the why!  
 If, from star to star, from world to world,  
 In but a single moment I could fly,  
 Encompassing the thought beyond our thought—  
 The vision beyond our now-imperfect one—  
 I'd yield my soul! (*Pause.*)

Alluring dream, canst thou be realized?  
 Perhaps in countless eons yet to come  
 The mists will rise, but then of me will be  
 Dust, Death, Oblivion,—harrowing spectres  
 That sit and wait at life's fantastic feast.

(*Takes dagger from garment.*)

There is a sleep, as soundless as secure,  
 That locks out life's dramatic naughts once only.  
 But . . . shall this be now—

(*Regarding dagger.*)

With life in the fullest sum of living?  
 Once nearer and then the end. (*Pause.*) The end  
 to what?—

The here and hereafter? Ay; but be there  
 A beginning elsewhere that cannot matter—  
 That cannot make us pause.  
 It is not death or what's beyond this death  
 We fear, so much, as life's surcease.  
 The dread of being not is ten times o'er  
 Louder than the threat of judgment.  
 Yet come thou sovereign instrument and rend  
 This threadbare go-between of birth and death

14 MELMOTH THE WANDERER

That hangs wavering and web-like across the bridge  
Linking the eternities. *(Suddenly.)*

Who's there?

What phantom's this that comes so freely upon me?

Speak! *(Satan begins to appear.)*

Are you real? Have you substance? Form?

Or are you conjured up by my imaginings

Grown wild with longing? Is this madness? Say!

You weigh upon the unsubstantial air

Like a stifling smoke!

*Satan.* What, Melmoth, afraid of phantoms?

*Melmoth.* Who are you, speak!

*Satan.* Be composed. It is only I, and I am one  
that should not frighten you.

*Melmoth.* *(Recovering.)* Nay, you have not. It  
was the old fear of something sudden to the impres-  
sion of the senses that affected me, not thou, nay,  
not thou! Why should you, eh? But who are you,  
at that? What business have you here? Had I  
any faith in old wives' tales or legends of the  
church, I'd claim to know you.

*Satan.* The faith of your own eyes—

*Melmoth.* Come, what shall I call thee?

*Satan.* Thine own name, Melmoth.

*Melmoth.* Is thine so terrible that you debate  
its utterance?

*Satan.* Rather, it is so common there's little re-  
spect in telling it.

*Melmoth.* Heh, I know thee now!

*Satan.* As well as thou knowest thyself. But,  
what matters it who I am, so long as I can grant  
you your desires?

*Melmoth.* Eh—? You know them then!

*Satan.* Thoroughly.

*Melmoth.* And how is it that you know them?

*Satan.* To the two Eternals, knowledge is the only burden.

*Melmoth.* (*Eagerly.*) And would you grant me my desires?

*Satan.* I would.

*Melmoth.* (*Incredulously.*) The utmost of them?

*Satan.* The greatest as readily as the least.

*Melmoth.* (*Sceptically.*) That would be kindness from an evil source.

*Satan.* A common enough thing in this little merry-go-round.

*Melmoth.* But in his transactions, the Devil insures an earned premium, giving this for that and nothing gratis.

*Satan.* True! True! How well we understand each other, Melmoth. And knowing this, would you not deal with me?

*Melmoth.* So, so; if your conditions are acceptable.

*Satan.* Oh we shall come to terms, be thou assured. I'm a pleasant partner in a deal.

*Melmoth.* That is excellent on your extreme. But dealings with the Devil, 'tis known, tho they be auspicious of the fairest consequence, meet with high disaster in the end.

*Satan.* Who has not ventured has not won.

*Melmoth.* Or lost.

*Satan.* If so he may.

*Melmoth.* I am lost before I have begun.

*Satan.* If that were so I were not here.

*Melmoth.* Nay, you are here because 'tis so.

You are Satan, the Master-Mind, the Turn-Head of mortals, and that is something!

*Satan.* 'Tis plain your will is nurseling to your fears. You would be great, and yet, when the goal is in your arm-length reach, you would not grasp the means to come by it. Call me not Satan. 'Tis the name you balk at. Let us say that I am air; that I am an abstraction, real to your imaginings alone. Well then, would you not accept of air, of anything, that which you so madly crave, and say it was yourself that granted it? Be bold with me, Melmoth; your own reason shall win me to your confidence. Look upon me as the spirit of your desires; soliloquize with it; question it; ask it what you will; you yourself will know the proper answer. You yourself would give up twice the promises you set at naught for that which is in my power to grant you. Oh, how much greater is the light you crave than your conception of it. What is this world to you—to men of compass! What are its delights, its ambitions, its entire attractions, but a dreary contemplation—a dry and bootless study? See how your soul is flapping with its eager wings against the prison-bars of your own casting! See how it pants for liberty that it may breathe the rarer air of heaven, its native atmosphere! Come now, give me an answer worthy of the intellect and of the man before me. You hesitate. (*Pause.*) No? 'Tis just as well. (*Satan begins to go.*) H'm. Thus it is that little man, confronted with the thing he thought himself above, falls flat before it; and thus it is, that in a moment, courage and resolves of many years' fermenting, are dismissed. I leave you.

*Melmoth.* (*Aside.*) Heh, what now? There

is the substance of my only hope, but now re-animat-  
ed, now dissolving. Stay! Self-destruction makes  
an end and forfeits all; in light there's chance.  
Satan, stay!

*Satan.* You bid me pause?

*Melmoth.* Yes—

*Satan.* To bid me go again?

*Melmoth.* No—

*Satan.* Then what? I am impatient. Are you  
still without determination?

*Melmoth.* (*Hesitating.*) Satan—

*Satan.* Yes?—

*Melmoth.* Make me all-knowing and all-power-  
ful! Give me the key to the great Invisible! Open  
up to me the mystery of the world, that everything  
shall be as clear to me as the crystal of the Magi!  
If so you do, I'll give thee all thy asking. I'll barter  
away my soul!

*Satan.* Ah! There is strength and passion in  
your speech, Melmoth. Now you are earnest—  
sincere—intent!

*Melmoth.* Satan knows I am.

*Satan.* That is well, my friend, and were so  
well if other things, which I now bethink me I've  
neglected to discover to you, stood not in the way.  
Who would not, tell me,—and I'll fling this chal-  
lenge into the teeth of the world—who would not  
surrender his soul for the glory of Knowledge and  
Power? There are thousands, Melmoth, that have  
mightily aspired to the like, and as many mightily  
failed. Who is it, therefore, that shall qualify?

*Melmoth.* "Qualify?" What mean you, Satan?

*Satan.* As men of the world qualify for station,  
advancement, and degrees in office, so must one

qualify for this advancement, the most superlative. First one must chart the depths, the shallows and the flats; the calms and storm-centers of the world. Then, if having known and survived them, he can cry out in all the sureness of sincerity: "All sympathy between the world and me has ceased"—

*Melmoth.* (*Repeating.*) "All sympathy between me and the world has ceased."—You need not go further, Satan. Speak it in words of thunder! Write it in letters of flame! I cry it out now!

*Satan.* That you cannot.

*Melmoth.* Cannot?

*Satan.* No, for sympathies for the world are still clinging to you.

*Melmoth.* Nay, nay, Satan, you mistake me. I am alone. I am indifferent to all this sphere of sorrow and servility. I tell you I am alone—completely alone.

*Satan.* I doubt me, Melmoth, that you are.

*Melmoth.* You err, Satan, you purposely err; or is it that you do not understand me? I have nothing in common with men. Long ago I've turned my back upon the vanities of the world; I've ripped the Earth Spirit from my breast, and stand aside, not only *not* an actor, but lacking even the interest to be a spectator.

*Satan.* Well said but better proved. I am sceptical.

*Melmoth.* Then how shall it be determined? Say you, Satan, say you.

*Satan.* By a test.

*Melmoth.* A test?

*Satan.* Ay.

*Melmoth.* And that test—?

*Satan.* Shall lie in this; I'll thrust you into the ebb and flow of life; create you monarch of a mighty realm, and place at your disposal the means of tasting of all things,—to yield to, or to surmount. Wars will be waged; worlds will whirl about you to have or to destroy; a thousand passions will assail you; crime and probity, good and evil, love and hate will be the easy gifts of your heart and hand. If no sympathies for the world are awakened when thus brought in contact with it, you have triumphed, and attain the high light of your desires. But if, in the course of the trial, you realize that there are bonds so imperishable within you that you cannot deny them, nor fight against them, then have you failed. Whatever the outcome of this test, the forfeit is the same. What say you to it?

*Melmoth.* I understand—

*Satan.* And understanding me, are you resolved?

*Melmoth.* (*Slowly.*) I am resolved.

*Satan.* The tests upon you, then. Now 'tis an even tide; you know the hazard and 'tis all-in-all! In your most need I'll come to you, either when you are on the other bank arrived or sucked into an eddy of your own.

(*Stage grows dark until Melmoth and Satan are swallowed up. Bells toll, and there is a sound as of prayer.*)

*Curtain*

## ACT I

SCENE I—*The Throne Room in the Palace of Elsmere. The Throne is to the extreme left. Room is set out in the most elegant style. Rich tapestries and hangings adorn the walls. The floor is covered with heavy carpets and oriental rugs. Statuettes, pedestals, divans and other furnishings.*

*Enter De Forest, Edwin and Steele, as Palace-Guards.*

*Steele.* I'll lay down my arms, gentlemen, and go spin wool!

*Edwin.* How now, what's the matter?

*Steele.* This is duty fit for rheum and palsy. And we are neither old, crabbed nor crippled. Our place, gentlemen, should be upon the battlefield, at the king's side, fighting.

*De Forest.* Rather with the Prince, for he, being our friend and sometime sympathizer in our frolics, hath sooner claim upon our affection than Melmoth.

*Edwin.* De Forest, forget not, we are subjects.

*De Forest.* True; but there's a better bond than that what's sworn to.

*Edwin.* But not stronger.

*De Forest.* Even stronger; for friendship goes beyond allegiance, as touching the heart earlier than the mind. (*Enter messenger.*)

*Edwin.* Here comes a messenger from the field.

*Steele.* Intercept his news. There's much will come of it.

*Edwin.* Fellow, what's tidings abroad?

*Messenger.* Where's the Lord Chamberlain?

*All.* What's news abroad? Come now!

*Messenger.* I'll not tell it twice. Where's the Lord Chamberlain!

*Edwin.* That need not concern thee much! Tell us the news and we'll convey the intelligence ourselves.

*Messenger.* Pray, sirs, do not delay me. I've fought hard and ridden long. Where's His Lordship! Will you lead me to him or no?

*Edwin.* No.

*Messenger.* Then, sir, I'll seek him myself.

*(Aloud.)* My good Lord Pellas! My good Lord Pellas!

*Steele.* Peace! peace! sirrah! Thou'lt raise the castle by thy clamor!

*Messenger.* *(Aloud.)* My good Lord Pellas!

*De Forest.* Come, thou saucy fellow, we'll lead thee to him. *(All go out.)*

SCENE 2—*The same.*

*Enter Royce and Dohlgryn.*

*Dohlgryn.* Royce, I misgive the whole.

Our prince was ill-prepared and too precipitate

For the encounter; the more the reason,  
 Since so much depends upon the outcome.  
 If by an unlucky chance, by some  
 Odd, indelicate trick of fate which makes  
 A bubble of great expectations,  
 Esmund should fail to lend his favored arm  
 Unto the prince, or, as I apprehend,  
 Be discovered in the rendering,  
 Then,—then—

*Royce.* Then, what?

*Dohlgrin.* We shall be like the builders in Aladdin  
 With the fabric of our structure, floated  
 away.

*Royce.* Dohlgrin, do not let it fret you. Whatever follows from  
 This day's contention, we must stern ourselves  
 T' accepting. If unhappy, then to study  
 out  
 The policy those of us in union with the  
 Prince

Are to hold in the juncture.

And this for comfort:

There's no misfortune but hath a reconciling  
 grain

Of hope in it; we'll worm that out.

If Melmoth wins,

Be fortified until the very break

Of courage.

Failure's nothing when the spirit's firm—

It fans, not cools. And 'tis not strange to  
 you

That Fortune follows those who scorn her  
 frowns,

And balks at those too timid of her favors.

*Dohlgrin.* But victory were more nearly conformable

To our purpose.

*Royce.* That's so indeed. I spoke of failure as  
 contingent.

Victory's as possible. Oft times alone,

Strength of purpose, dominated by

Wild earnestness and confidence of arms,

Has triumphed over numbers.

*Dohlgrin.* (*Pause.*) Is there yet no information from the field?

*Royce.* No.

*Dohlgrin.* I wonder there is not.

*Royce.* The messengers are tardy. I cannot account for it else.

*Dohlgrin.* Oh, I would the outcome of the fray were known

So that suspense,

More trying than the knowledge of defeat,  
Might sooner be relieved. Even as I speak,  
Our Prince,

Free to the chance of every venturing arrow,

And bold to the edge and thrust of traitor-swords,

May learn the fierceness of encounter, and by't

Lose the lesson.

*Royce.* Not that, Dohlgrin, not that! You speak unwell.

We cannot afford this fear.

John must live, for there's no thinking otherwise.

Pray, do not worry o'er the moment so,

Nor trim it with such sad fancies of the mind

As torture us into pale suggestions,

And play with our desires. Be rich with hope,

And stand firm in the thought that Right,

Delayed awhile in her composition,

Triumphs finally.

*Dohlgrin.* But this Melmoth, they say,  
Is so singly fashioned in his nature,  
So iron-mighty in his mastery,  
He's strange to failure.

*Royce.* 'Tis nothing, Dohlgrin, but our dread of  
him

Makes him huge. We, made weak  
By want of confidence, irresolution,  
Loss of spirits, slavery to fear,  
See only the Colossus we have reared  
And forget the man himself.  
Nay, be he as terrible as Typhoeus  
And thrice-forbidding,  
There still are thunderbolts to quell him.  
But here's news in haste.

(*Enter Pellas, Kemiss, Messenger and Courtiers*).

*Dohlgrin.* There's triumph in their eyes; my  
heart sinks.

*Pellas.* (*To messenger.*) Half our anxious fears,  
by these fair words:

"Melmoth lives", and what rejoiceth us  
Even equally, "Is mettle to the fray",  
Have been allayed.

The other half, urged by the quickening spur  
Of imperfect knowledge of the encounter  
Hangs upon the temper of your speech.  
Proceed then with the intelligence.

*Royce.* (*Aside.*) Dohlgrin, be calm; there's  
space for hope.

*Messenger.* We came upon the rebels ere the sun  
Had quite described the quarter of his arc  
Across the sky.

It was near Devon on the farther side

We joined in battle. Full equal to our numbers

The traitor-villains, like avenging fiends  
Dedicated to destruction,  
Told back blow for blow, and all the while  
The fateful contest held without a tide  
To force an either current.

Then our most valiant Melmoth pressed to  
the front,

And by the action, prompted similar among  
our men.

The brunt of battle weighed against his  
shield.

He, like one possessed, with tireless sword,  
Flew amongst the foe and cleaved the lines.

The coward slaves did shrink before his mien  
And called to God when they beheld his

plume  
Waving like Death above them. Tho' set  
about

With many a spear presuming towards his  
heart,

He scorned all steel, being himself invulner-  
able.

Thus broke he through the vanguard of se-  
cure suspense,

And caused the enemy, fly.

*Royce.* (*Eagerly.*) But thus it ended not?

*Messenger.* No. (*Dohlgrin looks to Royce.*)

For seeing John to charge our strongest  
lance

And battle on, unpersuaded by the panic,

His men beat back the palsyng ghoulds of  
fear

And rallied to the fight, and once again  
 The fate of victory hung but on a cast,—  
 So closely gambled Triumph and Defeat,  
 The fickle strumpets!  
 Thrice did we urge upon them, thrice drew  
 back;

And every onslaught yielded neither gain,  
 But robbed the ranks of many an earnest  
 arm.

*Pellas.* Of what duration was this changing fit?

*Dohlgrin.* What then ensued, say on?

*Messenger.* The conflict slackened at the hour  
 of noon,

When man and beast, nigh spent with brazen  
 toil

Did labor more through habit than through  
 art.

Thus did I leave them.

*Pellas.* And this was noon?

*Messenger.* Ay.

*Royce.* 'Tis two now.

*Pellas.* Is't two?

*Kemiss.* I take 'tis more.

*Dohlgrin.* What many things may chance have  
 wrought the while

To give the tale an unfamiliar face!

*Kemiss.* (*To Pellas.*) How fare our sons, my  
 Lord?

*Royce.* (*To messenger.*) This news by now is  
 stale and profitless.

How came you to be late?

*Messenger.* (*Evasively.*) My lords, I have  
 more news—

*Royce.* Impart it quickly! Stand not on the

word!

*Dohlgrin.* (*To Royce.*) Royce, here is the worst!

*Messenger.* They spoke of treason in the ranks—

*All.* What! "Treason!"

*Messenger.* Ay; and of no inconsequence.

*Royce.* Treason, alas!

*Dohlgrin.* (*To Royce.*) He must have been betrayed.

*Royce* (*To Dohlgrin.*) There is no doubt; few knew our purpose.

*Pellas.* (*To Messenger.*) Who is he that bears this brand of guilt?

Or are there many more than one concerned?

*Messenger.* Of this am I ignorant. So much is known:

A plot to annex some certain cohorts

To the Prince's, and trip our own armies

In their first manoeuvres,

Was discovered to His Royal Majesty

In time to thwart the whole;

Else 'twould have worked disaster to our men

And made sure defeat.

No further knowledge of the matter, sirs,

Do I entertain.

*Kemiss.* Alas for Elsmere, when continued strife

Shakes her from that dear tranquillity

Which was her pride. When treason,

Sprung from th' unhealthy womb of discontent,

Which instructs us to rebellion,

Makes pale the name of honor to her sons!

*Pellas.* (*To Messenger.*) On this report we rest more hope than anything.

Would you had brought us more apprising  
news

And fortified our trust in triumph!

*Royce.* But whatever befall, the State must be  
insured

Against encroaching might of monarchy.

*Kemiss.* If peace could join with might!—

*Dohlgrin.* And might with clemency!—

*Pellas.* The time's not now to speak of such far  
things.

The present is fast enough. (*Enter Second  
Messenger.*)

*First Messenger.* Here is one that shall decide  
our doubts.

Comrade, good cheer!

Let thy words commend thy presence here.

*All.* Speak, sir, what news?

*Second Messenger.* The victory is ours. Mel-  
moth comes in triumph from the field.

*Royce and Dohlgrin.* (*Breathlessly.*) And what  
of John?—Is he fallen?

*Second Messenger.* The base pretender with a  
meagre force

Has sought safety in flight,—

*Dohlgrin.* (*To Royce.*) Unhappy man!

*Second Messenger.* And Esmund—

*Royce and Dohlgrin.* Ay, and what of him?

*Second Messenger.* Complicated in a most griev-  
ous charge

Is to the Tower sent.

*All.* (*But Royce and Dohlgrin.*) Esmund!

*Kemiss.* Recall yourself, do you speak soothe?

*Second Messenger.* 'Tis even as I say.

*Kemiss.* Why, for what offence? I pray you!

*First Messenger.* I have spoken it already.

*Second Messenger.* Treason, sir.

*Kemiss.* Sirs, do you say 'treason?'

*Second Messenger.* I do.

*Kemiss.* Oh God, give me strength to bear it  
all!

Yet I should ha'e known that such a thing  
might be.

Love for the prince did overrun his vows

Even as a stream,

Contained by an artificial might,

Will overrun its dam.

Lead me hence, good friends.

*Pellas.* (*To Kemiss.*) My lord, I'm sorry for  
your sake.

*Royce.* (*To Kemiss.*) Be of brave cheer, my  
lord, my lord.

Often treason hath an honor in it

Loyalty may lack.

(*Exeunt Kemiss and several Courtiers.*)

*Pellas.* Did Francis bear him well?

*Second Messenger.* With so much valor, sir,  
that he gained at once the King's high  
favor.

*Royce.* (*Aside.*) Hear that, Dohlgrin!

*Second Messenger.* He is a soldier, sir.

*Pellas.* In that he is all. It does my heart  
great joy;

He's doubly paid in gratitude and affection.

(*Sound of trumpets and drums.*)

The King's arrived, my lords. Prepare to  
welcome him.

(*Enter Melmoth, as king; St. Francis,  
Berkeley, Brabant, Toussan, Splinters*)

*and soldiers—some of whom go over the stage and exeunt.)*

*All.* All hail! All hail! All hail!

*Melmoth.* (*Sarcastically.*) Victory over life is still master of tribute!

Heh, I could almost be flattered at this reception!

Acclaim us better, my lords, better! We have drawn first blood.

*All.* All hail! All hail!

*Melmoth.* (*Abruptly.*) Pellas!

*Pellas.* My gracious lord?

*Melmoth.* Where is the Old Duke Kemiss? Why came he not forth to greet us?

*Pellas.* He is to his chambers gone, my lord. He is unwell. The report of his son's behaviour broke his spirit, and—

*Melmoth.* That's an indulgence of the old man, tell me! Him we wanted most. We have much to command of him. (*Aloud.*)

But for the stain upon our victory's crest

Which now occasions a regretful shift

To what has been,

We were whole-honored in the war,

And our triumph, perfect as the cause

That occasioned it—eh, my lord?

*A Lord.* Ay, my lord—

*Melmoth.* Ay, what—? You know not what.

*A Lord.* (*Confused.*) Indeed, my lord—

*Melmoth.* (*Continuing.*) But every joy is sweeter for the grain

Of bitterness mixed therein. Were there no treason

To give the edge to conflict, then the struggle

Were less genuine; the victory less cherished.

Yet the fault,  
Like the haze upon a crystal, dulls the thing.  
He that's guilty,  
And all that had a say in bending him  
To such a following, must answer  
For the shame that's ours. And there are  
those,

I promise, though secret in their doings,  
Shall be forced,  
Into self-condemning eloquence. (*To Royce  
and Dohlgrin.*) You, sirs,  
Go seek old Kemiss out.

Bring him promptly to our presence here,  
That we may speak to him and so, perchance,  
Discover where the spring and fountain-head

Of this most inelegant turn, lies.

(*Melmoth seats himself on the throne.*)

*Splinters.* Thou hast him guilty, king, ere thou  
hast him at all. Listen, Splinters. Who'll  
listen to a fool but a wise man? Yet, methinks,  
rather the unprejudiced judgment  
of a fool than the bias of a king.

*Pellas.* My lord, I say it without motive or offense:

The Old Duke stands high above suspicion.  
He was nothing knowing of the matter  
Until 'twas common. That I can vouch-  
safe.

I stood by him when the intelligence was  
brought;

I marked his mien, and if the duke be guilty,

And guilt can put on such an innocence,  
Then is guilt none.

*Melmoth.* What, Pellas, do you defend him?

*Pellas.* I tell my Lord the truth.

*Melmoth.* I asked not for it. Now, sirs—(*To Royce and Dohlgrin.*)

*Splinters.* Old men and fools are no distant relatives; and fools have not the wisdom to lie. Therefore believe him, king.

*Royce.* In all respect of office, Most High Sovereign,

We would be spared this uncongenial duty  
That makes us slack in the performance o't.  
Kemiss is not well, and this last piece,  
His son's delinquency, as it appears,  
Added to the infirmities of age,  
Have forced him to his bed.

Any such exertion on his part

As that you now demand of him, is done  
On penalty of health, which doth forfend it—

*Melmoth.* We'll not be won by idle sentiment!  
(*To Royce.*) What, sir,

Wouldst teach me reason? Wouldst occupy  
my throne?

I'll not implore that I may be obeyed!

Go at once and bring the old man here.

You need not speak again. (*Exeunt Royce and Dohlgrin.*)

*Splinters.* Such kindness in a man makes record  
in Heaven and jubilee in Hell. The  
world's grown better, la!

*Melmoth.* That which treason loses in the erring,

Loyalty doth gain. St. Francis, stand you

forth.

(*Francis comes forth*).

For the many and divers services  
 Well and worthily conceived the state—  
 As too most faithfully performed—  
 In consciousness of duty and allegiance,  
 To you I transfer all of the domains,  
 Offices and titles appurtenant  
 To the late Marquis of Lode, Old Kemiss'  
 son;  
 Whom, in his stead,  
 Here publicly I do create you. This day  
 hence  
 You come into possession of those titles  
 Now observed.

*Berkeley.* (*To Brabant.*) Oh, this smells rank!  
*Splinters.* These are trappings too heavy for an  
 honest man, but they are high strings to  
 hang by. King, you make an enemy now.  
 Gratitude is a virtue of the great; the  
 small whistle it, like an old song, and for-  
 get. How's your load, Marquis? See  
 to bear it well. Nor for a "copia ver-  
 borum".

*St. Francis.* My most dear lord, there is a time  
 when words  
 From bountiness of gratitude, run over  
 One another and fail their utterance.  
 Had I the eloquence to plead my thanks,  
 And art to work words into fashion,  
 Yet would my speech be all too insufficient  
 To do my feelings justice. Not for my  
 words, therefore,  
 But for my sentiments, which stay still

unconveyed,  
 Believe me to be earnest in all things  
 That point to Elsmere's weal, above the  
 thought  
 Of recompense.

*Splinters.* I'll eat grass if that were more than  
 words!

*Melmoth.* Heh, that was well spoken, sir.  
 Let us trust you'll wear your offices  
 With the same dignity that marked you  
 of late.

*Splinters.* Power even the noblest must abuse;  
 but who's noble now that hath an honor?

*St. Francis (Kneeling).* I'm ever your humble  
 servant, sir.

*Splinters.* Until I become your master, sir. De-  
 pend on it, there's no fool like a great fool.  
 Listen to wisdom, King, and you'll need  
 no ears.

(*Enter Kemiss between Dohlgrin and Royce*)

There comes sincerity which is too old-  
 fashioned to be tolerated here.

*Melmoth.* Here, Kemiss.

*Kemiss.* My Lord.

*Melmoth.* Stand you before us and relate your  
 part.

In that grave cause which summons you now  
 To our presence. Of your son's indiscretion  
 You know, and 'tis no matter to persuade me,  
 Knew too well. Your sympathies are else-  
 part

Than with us. That need not deny, old  
 man.

Yourself reveal the truth.

Not that part which oft contrives to shield  
The wrong, but the perfect whole of it.

(Pause)

And know, if you will not tell of him  
That, mirror-like, reflects on you and all  
Your strain the blemish of his treason,  
Then shall I hold your reluctance  
As a sign of acquiescence in his deed;  
Or better still, if this have more the truth,  
As I suspect,—of participation.

*Splinters.* Angels marry him or he'll bag Old  
Scratch himself.

*Kemiss.* See, there is no harder stroke than this  
To bend me sooner to my grave. He,  
Whom we ever cherished as the son of promise  
To his country and his line, has cheated  
Expectation of her due, and shown himself  
Eccentric in life's orbit.

Yet he loved the Prince. That was genuine;  
And tended stronger than his pledge to serve  
His King. Then let us say that love,  
Than which there is no more exalted bond,  
Taught him a greater duty. Which way he  
bent,

Though failing of allegiance, 'twas done in  
honour;

I should not call it guilt.

*Melmoth.* Had you then no knowledge of the  
thought

Which shaped itself so ugly? Come, old man,  
Confess, and I shall hold thee light.

*Kemiss.* I knew nothing, sir.

*Melmoth.* Let not thy tongue slur the truth,  
Kemiss!

*Kemiss.* Nay, King, not all your emphasis,  
 Can tempt me to avow to that  
 Which I, in all my senses, am guiltless of.  
 If thou wilt urge me to the crack, why,—  
 I swear to God my innocence.

*Melmoth.* What, so old and yet so unproved?  
 Hast no respect for thy gray hairs  
 Which must remind thee of a reckoning?

*Kemiss.* (*To the Lords.*) Why have you  
 brought me here, my lords?  
 To go the wrath and vengeance of this monarch?

To be the butt and shot of his contumely?  
 Once again, King, I cry my innocence.  
 If thou thinkst still to mock at my exclams,  
 Oh king, thou liest!

*Splinters.* Go it, old boy! Let it froth! Conflict's the yeast of Life.

*Melmoth.* Hey, what? "Liest!"  
 You've urged your own doom upon you,  
 man!

Your words have put you beyond the reach  
 or hope  
 Of any sympathy that could, with reason,  
 Be extended you.

*Kemiss.* I awaited none. Let out your spleen!  
 I am reconciled

To whatever fate you'll measure out to me.

*Melmoth.* Then, old Kemiss, before the Court,  
 I say it:

You, and any in the line that hold your  
 name,

And claim your lineage, are this day forth—  
 And 'twill be futile to appeal the word—

Banished from the kingdom!

*Splinters.* Too much charity ruins the giver.  
Smile at thy release, old man. The rest's  
heaven.

*Dohlgrin.* Surely this is not in seriousness said?

*Royce.* Let me beseech the king to hear me once.  
Old age misses art to fashion things un-  
familiar.

They only toy with truth that sphere the  
tricks

Of life, not those beyond them. Believe  
him, my lord.

There's that much truth we measure by his  
words,

How much more is in his heart!

*Melmoth.* Enough! Not in your power is it  
to affect me!

Nor all the world, should it combine to  
plead

For him, can make me change, or teach me  
clemency

Where I'm not so leaned.

*Pellas.* My gracious Lord, in our Duke's be-  
half—

*Melmoth.* What, thou too! Now then be  
silent all!

And let no voice be raised above mine own

In this decision! Who'll presume among you

Let him look to him!

*De Forest.* My Lord—

*Melmoth.* Shut your damned lips, I'll none of  
you!

*Berkeley.* Yet, my Lord—

*Melmoth.* Did I not say enough?

*Dohlgrin.* Hear me—

*Melmoth.* (*Rising from the throne.*) What!

I'll shake you like a rat!

Now, begone, or I'll din hell into you, thou  
trash!

(*Enter Dolora.*)

*Dolora.* Where is my father? (*Goes to Kemiss.*)

*Melmoth.* (*Looking after Dolora.*)

Why does she come that has no fitness here?  
Of all earth's creatures, these I most abhor.  
They resolve my hate into a steam of pas-  
sion

Which leaves me weak. Madam, do you  
know your place?—

The offence of entrance pricks us not so  
much

As the knowing 'tis forbidden here, and yet  
Neglecting it. But they are unreasoning,  
Strange beings of a still unperished age.

*Dolora.* Banished! Banished!

*Melmoth.* Madam, do you know your place?

*Dolora.* I do beseech your pardon, my lord—

*Melmoth.* There is no pardon!

*Dolora.* I crave your mercy, then.

*Kemiss.* Do not, daughter. There is one that  
knows it not.

Nor plead with him; 'tis vain to seek to  
change

The imperial word. What he has spoken

We shall with resignation follow out.

I would the punishment were mine alone,

Not thine to share in.

*Dolora.* But I must speak, even as much in duty

As in justice.

*Melmoth.* Who is it that must speak?

*Dolora.* My gracious Lord—

*Melmoth.* Nay, nay, who is it that *must* speak?

*Dolora.* Most grand sovereign, give grace unto my speech

And suffer me but these poor protestations.

*Melmoth.* Siren, I'll make thy song uncited!  
I'll stuff up mine ears.

*Dolora.* Look upon the old man thou wouldst banish.

His white hairs plead a softer attitude  
Than that of severity. Be ruled by kindness;

And if you have not that especial mercy in you

Then reflect it from those radiant about you;  
They have it in that full abundance, you seem not to.

But I am confident,

The spirit that shines from the eye must betray

The goodness of the heart, tho' o'er the face is set

The mask of stern indifference.

Be ruled by kindness;

Yet towards his truth be stricter than thou wilt;

Towards his words, be lenient; towards his years

Be thou merciful. Judge him evenly,

For I know not when my father's love for truth

Was less than love for life.

*Melmoth.* No! No! No! I have spoken!

*Dolora.* Then must you speak again.

*Melmoth.* Mock not at me, lady! Mock not at me!

*Dolora.* There is no judgment that is absolute, Except it be Above. For here on earth, Perfection being lost, we cannot claim it. Oh bear thine office well and worthily! Let it not deceive thee. Let not thy sceptre—

The temporary grant of heaven—

Be a spear to hurt, but a wand to heal.

Thou art most clear when thou art most forbearing;

I kneel in supplication. (*Kneels.*)

*Melmoth.* Away! Away! Come not near me! Hold aloof! What, Circe, you will have me tricked? Feed acorns to the hogs, I am Ulysses, I!

*Dolora.* I have no charm, great king, no talisman,

To persuade thee to revoke thy word,

But the truth and the plea for mercy.

Be merciful, oh sire! I kiss your hand.

*Melmoth.* Drive her from me, Pellas! Ho! Francis! Guards! Take her away!

(*Rises from his throne.*) She has come here to infuriate my passions—to subvert my reason. Where will she lead me? Where?

To the white wastes of the moon? Take her away! She makes me mad! Now I cannot speak or do. Stand away! (*to Dolora*) Will you touch me with your lips again? Ha! You make me mad!

(*Exit Melmoth followed by officers and several courtiers.*)

*Courtiers* Mercy on us all!

*Royce.* (*To Dolora*) Madam, I take this well.

*Dolora.* Oh, I know not what to think. I have moved him so! And yet—

*St. Francis.* I have great fear his word cannot be changed. His majesty's too absolute.

*Pellas.* That's to be discovered. Meanwhile friends, good cheer;

To-morrow is another day.

(*Exeunt all but Dohlgrin, Berkeley, and Brabant*).

*Dohlgrin.* What do you make of it all, gentlemen?

*Brabant.* Of Francis and his newly-borrowed robes?

*Dohlgrin.* No—and what of that?

*Brabant.* I have many doubts assailing me just now.

*Berkeley.* I'll go beyond and say I know the truth. Conviction gives character to my suspicions. Francis has betrayed Esmund!

*Dohlgrin.* Can we be sure of it?

*Berkeley.* Proof before conviction.

*Brabant.* What is to be done?

*Dohlgrin.* This: Go you, my lords, and discover the retreat of our fugitive Prince. Report to him the state of all that has transpired. I'll to Royce and learn his mind. Together we will to Esmund. Now friends, farewell.

*Brabant.* Farewell.

*Dohlgrin.* When you do pass the Tower, forget not to deliver this to Walden, Lieutenant of the Tower, who is one of us. It speaks of our intent to visit Esmund to-night, incognito.

(*Dohlgrin gives note to Brabant*).

*Berkeley.* Well; good-night.

*Dohlgrin.* Good night. Greet our Prince in all affection. Bid him take comfort. When once our way is clear from out this maze, we'll strike, and this time win for him, by God's grace. (*They go out*).

FORE-CURTAIN. THE SAME.

*Enter St. Francis and Toussan.*

*St. Francis.* We have manoeuvred well, Toussan.

*Toussan.* Merry, my lord, we have! The early tide is caught. 'Tis now but to trim our sails and head for the golden fleece.

*St. Francis.* Counsel, Toussan, Counsel! The others must be answered. There's Royce, there's—

*Toussan.* And they shall be answered, my sweet lord! Mark me: We must play both hands as we have never played them before. Yet if we are trapped, merry, my sweet lord, we'll not be scotched. To trip us on one leg is to make us stand firmer on the other. Go to them to-night. You'll find them in the Tower with Esmund or I'll take to writing Scriptures.

*St. Francis.* "Go to them!" How, Toussan, "go to them?"

*Toussan.* That's the logic. That will be the smart thing. That will be the—

*St. Francis.* But, "go to them!"

*Toussan.* Go to! Go to them. That's my expression. Ay, go to them. Thou'lt cozen them by thy appearance amongst them and thou'lt bait them

by thy easy manner. Come, I'll teach thee what.  
*Curtain*

SCENE 3—*Room in the Castle.*

*Enter Servant to Dolora.*

*Dolora.* Well, is his majesty about?

*Servant.* He is, madam, in his orchard.

*Dolora.* Are any with him?

*Servant.* None.

*Dolora.* Is it his wont to keep him there this time?

*Servant.* Ay, madam, the length of an half-hour.

*Dolora.* Then shall I seek him in the palace.

For this I am much beholden unto you. (*Servant goes.*)—Pray you, a while. Didst take in his mien?

*Servant.* Not surely, madam. Yet, by the heaviness of his glance, methinks he has missed the night.

*Dolora.* Indeed! Then he was fretful?

*Servant.* No—

*Dolora.* Untoward?

*Servant.* Neither; he was more—abstracted.

(*Enter Cedrielle.*)

*Dolora.* I thank you, sir, I thank you.

*Cedrielle.* Astir so early, madam? (*Exit Servant.*)

*Dolora.* Could I sleep, I were not surely.

*Cedrielle.* And were you asleep you could not truly. But, madam, your mirror is out with you this morning. You look weary. (*Approaching her.*) Nay, you have not slept!

*Dolora.* To the heart of many cares there is no

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rest. And when night disjoins itself from sleep, nature's assailed.

*Cedrielle.* In all good faith, sweet madam, you do yourself hurt to let things take hold on you so.

*Dolora.* When these sad matters shall adjust themselves, I'll be myself again. But, Cedrielle, make ready my attire and spare no effort to see me pleasing fair. I must to the king.

*Cedrielle.* What, madam, now?

*Dolora.* Now—with half the day given over to preparation.

*Cedrielle.* You jest seriously, madam.

*Dolora.* Ah, Cedrielle, there is no time more darkling than the present. Come.

*Cedrielle.* We'll see our duty done. You cannot want assurance; your purpose itself must make you rich with it.

*Dolora.* Heaven intercede for us.

*Cedrielle.* Ay, madam. (*They go out.*)

SCENE 4—*Same as Scene 1.*

*Traders, Merchants, Poets, Painters, Men of Profession discovered in groups, awaiting Melmoth.*

*Enter Jeweler.*

*Jeweler.* Masters, good fortune. His majesty shall attend us presently. He is even now without.

*Merchant.* Gentlemen, your good will. My business with the king is of such immediate nature, it begs special address.

*Second Merchant.* By your leave, dear sir, I have tarried here—

*Third Merchant.* Your pardon both; my matter is urgent. Allow me priority. (*All begin press-*

*ing forward.*)

*Some.* Nay, press not so upon us.

*Merchant.* Gentlemen, see to your demeanor.

*Others.* We know our place, sir.

*(Enter Melmoth, St. Francis, Splinters, Courtiers and retainers.)*

*Jeweler. (Kneeling.)* My gracious lord—

*First Merchant. (Kneeling.)* Most high sovereign—

*Second Merchant. (Kneeling.)* My royal liege!

*St. Francis.* Make room; stand away!

*Splinters.* Go to the rear, chapmen, the fore-castle's swamped.

*Melmoth.* They crowd about me like bees about the promise of a flower.

Francis, we'll hear you anon. *(To Merchants.)*

Give space, will you? *(To Courtiers.)* My lords, be greeted.

If there is no favor to seek of me to-day, or yours to give, indulge me here.

*De Forest.* The favor, my lord, is in your company. Indeed, 'tis all—

*Melmoth. (As many do him homage.)* Did I not swear against it—

Flaunt not your periwigs in my face! Who bends the knee's a slave! Up, I say! Or shall I step upon you? *(Merchants rise.)*

*Splinters.* Step upon him, King, and thou'lt exalt him; or spit upon him and thou'lt make a braggart of him for the rest of his life; he'll write thy memoirs for it, with a preface. *(Melmoth is seated.)*

*First Jeweler.* I claim your patience, my liege.

*Splinters.* You mean his gold.

*First Jeweler.* This gem, my lord, prefer to  
gaze upon it;  
It boasts of history as varied as the nations.  
It was the crown-jewel—

*Second Jeweler.* This, my lord, you sought for.  
See, it is as bright as the eye of the Prophet!  
It teaches splendor to the sun.  
No star of heaven shines with this undecked.  
It was stolen from the caves of the giddy sea  
Beyond the zone. Accept it, your grace.

*Melmoth.* What value do you set upon this?

*Second Jeweler.* Ten thousand liras, most—

*Melmoth.* Ten thousand liras! By Mammon,  
royal figures truly! And this? (*Regarding  
the other gem.*)

*First Jeweler.* His majesty may himself de-  
termine.

*Splinters.* Nothing then, and farewell. Fools  
buy and ninnies sell—that's trade. (*Exit  
Splinters.*)

*Melmoth.* As traffickers, you appraise your cus-  
toms well.

(*Holding up gem.*) How many centuries  
were lost in thy pursuit,

Thou mean object of madness and longing!  
I have thee now. What is thy worth? And  
thine? (*Regarding other gems.*)

Ten thousand lives? Or more? Thou art  
history!

Intellectual man, that lets this be his chron-  
icler!

Most valuable wert thou when thou didst lie  
Concealed beneath the waves, far from the  
delving

And omnivorous eye of man!—  
 Who's the fool that would possess thee now?  
 Take it—thou! (*Hands it to a courtier.*)  
 Sell it to the honest men.  
 Send it on its round once more and groan  
 At the wake of ruin it leaves behind it.

*Merchants.* Here, my lord—

*Second Merchant.* This, my gracious—

*Third Merchant.* Will you look upon this—?  
 (*Each Merchant offers his special ware.*)

*Melmoth.* (*To the Painter, ignoring Merchants.*) What's that you have there?  
 Whose lily face is this!

(*Painter has exposed painting of Melmoth.*)

*Painter.* My lord; good, my lord—

*Melmoth.* False protestor of thine art,—

*Painter.* Hear me, sire—

*Melmoth.* My spirit's writ upon my face!—  
 peace!

Where's the greedy eye, the sensuous mouth;  
 The lines of prejudice, pride, and scorn  
 That show up the imperfections of my soul?  
 Peace! Where are they? Art thou an artist?  
 Canst copy nature and paint a naked wall?  
 Thou canst not, flatterer; thou canst not,  
 tradesman;

Thou canst not do so simple thing as that  
 Till thou hast separated man from man,  
 And earth from heaven!

(*Painter retires.*)

*Poet.* Magnanimous sire!

*Melmoth.* Ah! What wouldst thou, thou care-worn figure of a man? Art thou a poet? Or art thou merely clinging to the tail of Pegasus? Come,

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show thy talent. Rhyme me a jingle on nothing. No? Speak. (*Poet pauses.*) Is it so difficult then? You do this days out of the week and your dreams are many times nothing. Rhyme me a jingle on something. That's a task for a poet! Or midway between something and nothing; rhyme me anything. What, not anything? Not something? Not even nothing?

*Poet.* Be graciously disposed, my lord. Here is that which Fame

On its tip-toe waits to acknowledge.

Thine's the first eye that's given to linger over

And adorn it. (*Proffers the Manuscript.*)

*Melmoth.* (*Regarding Manuscript.*) "The Pleasures of Life." A fable, eh, a fable? Ha!—ha! Poor man, what dreams here are dreamed in vain! Now thou hast a conscience to plague thee, for thou hast created,—and we create in order to destroy! Do you not know that thus has God, self-willed, in his creation sinned? I'll save thee, poet, the sadness of knowing it will perish. (*Tears manuscript.*)

*Poet.* Oh, spare it, great Prince! (*Kneeling.*) The rose of my dearest fancy! The extreme effort of my genius! The work of twenty years! (*Picking up fragments.*) Oh, it is ruined, ruined!

*Melmoth.* Fool, smile rather and be contented. Take thy measure of gold and fare thee well. What in this world is lasting? Know you not that all must pass away like a season? Time, himself, the great eternal monarch of decay, wrecks his own kingdom! How long thinkst thou to have lived? An hundred years? Five hundred years? A thou-

sand years? Others will rise to smile at your crudities; to wonder at your innocence; to triumph at your failure; and raise alike an unendurable mansion, upon the ashes of your fondest dreams! (*Merchants begin offering their wares again.*) Enough! Enough! Depart! (*They begin to go out.*)

Nearness of all great objects of desire

Makes them trifling.

To know that every mortal thing's available  
Satisfies the craving for it.

What is here on earth to be desired?

Bring me that which cannot be acquired!

(*To Courtiers.*) For a while, my lords, eh?

(*Exeunt all but Melmoth and St. Francis.*)

*St. Francis.* Well now, my lord, will you hear me further?— (*Enter Pellas.*)

*Melmoth.* Stay. We'll hear your father first.  
What is it, Pellas?

*Pellas.* My lord, the ambassadors from Austria are most eager to commend themselves to your grace.

*Melmoth.* What's their commission? 'Tis often trifles fret our weary pillow when matters signal of high consequence find us secure in unconcerned repose.

*Pellas.* Immediate trifles, my liege, take their precedence over gravest issues, more removed.

*Melmoth.* Therein are you wrong, old man.

*Pellas.* I beg—

*Melmoth.* Come, we'll not argue. What have my lords from Austria to say?

*Pellas.* In eager application of our mutual interest, they would find favor with his majesty to solicit a renewal of the treaty made nine years back and binding yet some time. And too, they seek the

countenance of Elsmere in their embroil with the nations of the north.

*Melmoth.* Heh, each would find a guardian goose-wing for his head!

*Pellas.* Good, my lord, I pray you give them patient audience, as all matters indicate to Elsmere's weal.

*Melmoth.* Elsmere! The name is like a knell!  
'Tis hung about my neck to weary me!

*Pellas.* How, my lord?

*Melmoth.* (*Abstracted*) I could have done without it, but that he whose purposes are as fixed as the gates of Hell, and as forbidding, may resolve an end. But I'll not sleep. He'll catch me hundred-eyed, and every eye awake.

*Pellas.* My gracious lord—

*Melmoth.* What, Pellas! I'll not receive them!

*Pellas.* But the state, my lord!

*Melmoth.* What of that?

*Pellas.* Think on it, my lord. Here in this living world, the merest act drags with it a lengthening chain of consequences. And when the happiness of a nation is suspended in the balance of one man's "yea" or "nay"—pardon, my lord,—that one should be more centred in his trust. Once more, my liege, I do entreat you, think upon the state.

*Melmoth.* Pellas, hear me:

Kings and empires, men and purposes,  
Are as the fashions which I contemplate,  
Out of season. These royal messengers  
On something bent, have teased me out of  
humor.

Yet we'll endure them for the part we play;  
As many men make forfeit of the 'would',

When to the 'must' they bring self-sacrifice,  
Cheating them both.—Bid them to my closet,  
Pellas;

I'll attend them presently.

*Pellas.* Thank you, my lord. (*Exit Pellas.*)

*St. Francis.* Well, my lord?

*Melmoth.* Well?

*St. Francis.* Well?—

*Melmoth.* You tell me so.

*St. Francis.* 'Tis so, 'tis so, my lord! Believe me, for thine own use, I tell thee so. Esmund was but the small finger of the conspiracy; be sure, for I know it. And besides, the hand's already healed and again feeling for the sceptre.

*Melmoth.* Oh, pish!

*St. Francis.* Oh, pish!

*Melmoth.* What's that?

*St. Francis.* Nothing—sir.

*Melmoth.* Nothing?—Nothing. (*Melmoth walks off.*)

*St. Francis.* Oh, let me be believed! Am I undeserving of good faith? Wherein, my king, have I merited your displeasure?

*Melmoth (indifferently).* What do you tell me?

*St. Francis.* I tell, my lord, what's stale, eh? What's without ground, without truth? I tell thee all that!

*Melmoth.* Francis, what will you have?

*St. Francis.* My lord's own caution for himself. To be ruler now is to have the sword of Damocles suspended above him. Had I the voice and power to enforce it, I'd well know whom, and how soon, to silence.

*Melmoth.* Doubtless, doubtless. But tell me, is

it immediate,—the danger, is it immediate?

*St. Francis.* Not quite, my lord.

*Melmoth.* Have they planned an action?

*St. Francis.* No, my lord, but—

*Melmoth.* Are their armies consorted?

*St. Francis.* They are not, my lord?

*Melmoth.* (*Rising in temper.*) Is then the Prince enforced, the spirit general, the thing at all?

*St. Francis.* Oh, my king—

*Melmoth.* (*Impatiently.*) I tell thee what, Francis, we'll speak of this again. That were best.

*St. Francis.* I marvel much—

*Melmoth.* (*Fiercely.*) Nay, that were best.

*St. Francis.* Ay, my lord, but—

*Melmoth.* I tell thee, that were best! (*Exit Francis.*) (*Enter Servant.*)

*Servant.* Your Majesty.

*Melmoth.* What, knave?

*Servant.* My liege, the lady Dolora who attends without, bade me commend her thus to your grace: your word of yesterday with special drift of the banishment of the duke, her father, having had no determinate conclusion, she begs his majesty—

*Melmoth.* I have no grant to make! Tell her "No!" I will not speak to her; (*aside*) I dare not, lest her firmness force mine to give way. (*To servant*) Slave, why do you linger? Did I not say—

*Servant.* What, my lord? I do not know your answer.

*Melmoth.* The villain perplexes me! Tell her—(*Hesitates.*)

You say she waits without?

*Servant.* Ay.

*Melmoth.* There, there, I know not what to

say! (*Pauses.*)

Go, bid her enter. (*Exit Servant.*)

I'll emphasize the letter of my charge;

Yet had I not spoken it, I would not now.

But having,—need remain. They shall be banished;

She with all the rest, guilty or guiltless.

'Tis more regard for safety, than desire

Which hurries me on to this extremity of action.

I must be cruel, that the spectre of my weaker self

May not point at me, accusingly. (*Enter Dolora.*)

Madam,—you are careless of the hour.

*Dolora.* I am sorry, my lord.

*Melmoth.* Hum.

*Dolora.* Shall I leave his Majesty for a better while when time shall be less his concern?

*Melmoth.* Heh? I like that! You have come, madam, have you not? And to your coming there's a purpose. What sham policy is it then, that you ask to leave?

*Dolora.* Believe me, my lord, to be sincere. If it please you to have me go, however my purpose be direct and importunate, I'll not remain to vex you.

*Melmoth.* What is your business with me?

*Dolora.* You know right well, my lord. . . .

*Melmoth.* I know nothing . . . nothing . . . Well? Now what? Ha! Ha!

*Dolora.* Oh, my lord, that's not possible. You cannot have so soon forgot. Nor is it well to assume that in so light a manner you have dismissed from your mind, the strength and consequence of

your words that have made us night-weary and heart-sore. Yesterday I could not be sure that you had meant for the decree to be recalled. Today I come to be told; to know whether you have nobly re-considered, or otherwise sustained your judgment. What word shall it be given me to hear?

*Melmoth.* I have, madam.

*Dolora.* 'Have,' what? Oh, what, my lord?

*Melmoth.* What? What? I say I have. That is sufficient.

*Dolora.* Realized how largely it would wrong us, and wrong yourself? Say it is so. Say "ay", my lord, and you will occasion more happiness by that word, than grief by the other. (*Approaching him.*) 'Twill be double atonement. Say "ay." (*Melmoth regards her blankly.*)

*Melmoth.* I do not know—I cannot—my senses are asleep—

*Dolora.* Melmoth!

*Melmoth.* And I say it. Ha! Ha! Let the winds bruit my weakness about the earth; I change my oath at a woman's bidding.

*Dolora.* Thanks; thanks.

*Melmoth.* And let the Kingdom of my Soul-Might confess to the beginning of its decline. Oh, why have you come at all, Dolora? You must tell me that! (*Grasps her hand.*) Are you conspired with the genius of the world? Are you sent in this unlikely form to bewilder me in my effort; to trip me in the great event, and make me beware thee? Why have you come?

*Dolora.* My lord—

*Melmoth.* Why have you come? To study out my inabilities, and so subvert me? Ha?

*Dolora.* My father—

*Melmoth.* Nay, why have you come? Confess it to me.—

Oh, this poisons all too soon, and all too sure,

The wholesomeness of thought. This frets the mind

Out of its velvet security,

Choking it full of raw and dreary doubts.

Leave me now. Your presence is torturing.

I cannot tell what it is, or what

It may arrive to, but portentous

It must be. I have yielded to you—that's wearying.

What rare charm are you weaving about me?

Better go. Ay, go. Go, *Dolora*.

*Dolora.* I go, *Melmoth*. Forgive me. I will not weary you. Farewell. You will. . . .

*Melmoth.* . . . you will not think of me, nor shall I haunt you—in your—dreams. (*Going.*)

*Melmoth.* Ha! what do you say? What do you say, *Dolora*?

*Dolora.* Even, *Melmoth*, even—as you—haunt mine.

(*Melmoth staggers as a terrible truth dawns upon him.*)

*Curtain*

## ACT II

SCENE I—*Grounds leading to the Palace. Palace is seen in the background, half hidden by tall trees and luxuriant plants. Marble seats between the trees are found along the path. Statuaries. Fantastiques.*

*Time*—Late in the afternoon. Grows darker as scene progresses.

*Discovered: Splinters and Mickle.*

*Mickle.* I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

*Splinters.* Mickle, if thou'lt take the earnest judgment of a friend, thou'rt beautiful. Thy person may be wanting of the fine points of symmetry, but its the totality, Mickle, the totality, and there's the difference. But, put powder on your nose and thou'lt be more fair. The world cares not so much for what thou art, as for what thou seemest. Therefore, put powder on your nose. The ladies of the court all do it, and they are counted fine. Even though, in the present hub, virtue is not so much honored, as honorable, I tell thee, Mickle, on the score of morality, rather be spouseless than spouseful; rather the butt of all men's scorn, than the object of one man's lust. But an thou wilt, put powder on your nose, and hold it high. Pretention is oft crown'd with approval, and 'tis an easy thing to wheedle the world for it will be wheedled. Now, farewell. There come the masters of little issue. Be satisfied, Mickle, there's security in poverty; greatness in humility. Farewell Mickle. Farewell in haste. (*Exit Mickle.*)

*Enter Courtiers*

*De Forest.* Good even, fool.

*Splinters.* Good even, fool.

*De Forest.* Where's my Lord Chamberlain, fool?

*Splinters.* What's your trade with him, fool?

*De Forest.* To hang all the fools in the kingdom.

*Splinters.* Then fly to save your neck, sir, for thou'lt be the first to kick from a halter. But verily, to find him, best remain here. He is with his son, sirs.

*Steele.* St. Francis?

*Splinters.* So do men call him; others call him the Marquis of Lode.

*Edwin.* A worthy gentleman.

*Splinters.* As my mistress Lady Finger is a worthy dame. He's a Turk, he's a weasel, he's a leech.

*De Forest.* How a Turk?

*Edwin.* Why a weasel?

*Steele.* Wherefore a leech?

*Splinters.* Nay, now that you question it, I am certain of it. A thousand times a Turk, a weasel and a leech; and between the hearing and the telling he must be an equivocating drag horse to span himself into such a load. And my grandam used to tell me, when I was in the vegetable age of my wit, that another's load is heaviest and drags soonest to hell. And this marquis being, as I said, a Turk, a weasel, and a leech, will tumble to it faster than a friar to a frail sister.

*Edwin.* What dost thou know of such matters?

*Splinters.* Knowing, I'll not tell you.

*Edwin.* Then art thou a lying rascal.

*Splinters.* Then art thou a knave; a scurvy placket-player; a hirsuite, crooked, black-livered, foul-mouthed, leather-faced villain! If that were't his lordship entering I'd tell thee what thou art.

(*Exit.*)

*Enter Pellas and St. Francis, and Courtiers who pass over the stage.*

*De Forest.* My lord, you desired to see us?

*Pellas.* Well arrived, gentlemen, we have need of you. The envoys from the several provinces leave tomorrow by sunrise. Be pleased to accept the commission of their escort and see them safely conveyed.

*De Forest.* Thanks, my lord, our duty shall be faithfully performed.

*Pellas.* Be courteous, sirs, above the discretion of silence, but not too forward in matters of the state. You understand.

*De Forest.* We do.

*Pellas.* Then, good-night. (*Exeunt courtiers.*)

Francis, I cared not give exception to your mien

Within the lords' particularity.

Speak then; you have grown of late,

So lost in speculation of yourself;

So altered in your bearing as in glance,

That I can scarce remind you as the same

Of but a fortnight past. Unfold yourself,  
sir;

You have no reason to lock your motives

From my better gaze.

*St. Francis.* I have none. If you've remarked  
me so

You are not all deceived. There are things,  
 sire,  
 Which carry us beyond the limits of the  
 moment  
 However instant, and leave us stranded  
 there.

So is it presently with me.  
 And being so, I cannot find myself  
 Able against it. If you would know the  
 cause,  
 Then it is that great one which conspires  
 The whole world into confederacy.

*Pellas.* I understand you. Nor does what you  
 say

Break in on me unexpectedly.  
 Yet it grieves me, sir,  
 That tho' your cause be honorable enough  
 I yet must conjure you,  
 If you would still maintain your place and  
 power,  
 Honor and regard at home and abroad,  
 And still enjoy the favor of the King,—  
 Fling away thy love,—forget Dolora.  
 Leave her to the purposes of Melmoth.  
 He loves her.

And that you may be certain of this last  
 Mine eyes held proof enough. As for you,  
 Francis,

You can best be noble thru great sacrifice;  
 For love that denies itself, is love indeed.

*St. Francis.* My sire, you do mistake my habit.  
 Not for nothing have I attained this hour,  
 That art and effort staked in fortune's lot-  
 tery

Should draw a blank. Nor shall I  
 So easily throw up my ambition  
 Because you would deny it me in this.

*Pellas.* I deny! Hear! Hear!

*St. Francis.* Why should I to the preference of  
 Melmoth

Yield this chance-hope of my happiness?  
 Much would I do for him, but hardly the  
 over-much

Which serves unhappiness to good intent.  
 You argue he is king and I his vassal,  
 And therefore should distress my own de-  
 sires;

But love, like death, ignores the grades of  
 rank;

That's satisfaction.

Nay, sire, I will go as I have gone  
 And do what I will do, regardless of all.

*Pellas.* (*irritated.*) Thou art rash, Francis; per-  
 haps a fool. These words,

In the emphasis of their utterance and mean-  
 ing,

Can portend no good. 'Tis not a virtue  
 To cross his majesty, I tell you,  
 For he is like a Cerberus asleep  
 Only in that his eyes are shut. But,  
 enough!

I leave you to your own purposes.

Revolve yet in your mind my counsel.

Even do you not respect it, give it heed.

If you would sacrifice all which is

And all which may be for the following

Of a mad fancy, do forget my warning,

And take my words as the senseless gabble

Of a dotard. (Exit.)

*St. Francis.* Oh, I know it well, this world of dominoes!

I've discovered it quite in time to set me smooth.

Nor need one play it fair to win it wisely.

'Tis a chance game where the least may gain the most;

An exchange, a fortune store,

Where circumvention and cunning draw

The better lot.—Farewell, father; your morals

Have made you what *you* are; *mine*, what I shall be.

(Enter *Cedrielle*)

*Cedrielle?*

*Cedrielle.* Dear sir, has my mistress gone this way?

*St. Francis.* No, sweet; what is the matter of your haste?

*Cedrielle.* I bring her news from the physician.

*St. Francis.* Is it immediate?

*Cedrielle.* I don't know.

*St. Francis.* The Duke, her father, is well?

*Cedrielle.* Little better, my lord.

*St. Francis.* Then tarry, sweet lady. Ill news together with its bearer is hardly ever welcome.

*Cedrielle.* Truly, my lord, it is as you say. But, nevertheless, I must hurry.

*St. Francis.* Go then, go then, you are unkind.

*Cedrielle.* (Hesitating.) Unkind, my lord? Unkind?

*St. Francis.* Will you not stay then?

*Cedrielle.* If it is your wish.

*St. Francis.* My pleasure. Hark, Cedrielle.

*Cedrielle.* What, my lord? (*She comes forward.*)

*St. Francis.* Dost thou value thy qualities in the measure of their worth?

*Cedrielle.* Ay; and therefore little.

*St. Francis.* Tell me, sweet, hast ever paid thy mirror the tribute it deserves?

*Cedrielle.* I've scolded it; I've mocked at it; I've stuck out my tongue at it, often enough, like this, see, my lord?

*St. Francis.* Pretty tongue that speaks such pretty things. Let me be thy mirror, Cedrielle.

*Cedrielle.* Nay, then you'll cast reflections on me too often.

*St. Francis.* Happy reflections, Cedrielle. Tell me something.

*Cedrielle.* What shall I say?

*St. Francis.* Anything thy precious lips would feign. Something sweet, something pretty, something like thyself.

*Cedrielle.* (*Coquettishly.*) I don't know.

*St. Francis.* (*Approaches her.*) Hark then, thou.

*Cedrielle.* I do, my lord.

*St. Francis.* Once, in the country of the Ottomans, I stood upon a pretty bank that overhangs the Sainted Galilee—

*Cedrielle.* Yes—?

*St. Francis.* And even as I gazed there rose above the surface of the charmed waters, like a vision in a dream, a woman rarely given to behold; and her hair, lustrous-black, unbraided to the joy of the amorous breezes, was not more beautiful

than thine!

*Cedrielle.* (*Secretly pleased.*) Pooh! Pooh!

*St. Francis.* She beckoned to me guilefully—temptingly. I could not stay myself. Without withhold I stepped into the sea, and “mirabile dictu!”—I found the water unyielding to my feet. Together we floated evenly, my arm clasped about her bosom, so . . . which was not gentler than thine! Then she spoke, and rich pearls dropped from lips, surely—not sweeter than these! (*Kisses her.*)

*Cedrielle.* Oh, sir, my lord! A pretty tale forsooth! Better a dream whence all sweet fancies rise.

*St. Francis.* A fancy worth all dreams, sweet Cedrielle. But that is not the end—

*Cedrielle.* What, more dreams?

*St. Francis.* More dreams, dear chuck, since they content you. Wouldst not more?

*Cedrielle.* (*Naively.*) I don't know.

*St. Francis.* (*Continuing.*) It was not long before we found her grot beneath the sea; and there, with most delicious whisperings, she charmed me to her couch, whose night of love was ending without end. Come, chuck, I'll lead thee there.

*Cedrielle.* Oh, where?

*St. Francis.* There!

*Cedrielle.* Where?

*St. Francis.* To thy mistress, sweet innocence.  
(*Exeunt both.*)

SCENE 2—*The same.*

*It becomes darker. Stars show faintly.*

*Enter Melmoth.*

*Melmoth.* Now is it to beware her!

Now is it to pit my soul against its vaunting.

These moments of effeminate emotions,  
Once overcome, will come more rare  
And then cease together.

Yet near her I must fail. 'Tis a fatality  
That warns the reason, and fastens on the  
heart

A sense of hopelessness.

'Forget her!' Else there is no sureness here  
Nor hereafter. But how? Hold aloof?  
Nay; the knowledge of her, near, must prevent.

Then, send her away, as far from the hope  
of the eye

As distance can secure. Do else—and  
fail;

That else must never be!

Nor all her words, however persuasive;  
Nor her silence, dangerous as her speech;  
Nor sighs, nor tears, nor prayers, nor anything,

Shall move me once. I'll send her away;  
'Twill root out doubt and make me whole  
again,

And chase away

What sick fantasies I would not near me.

I'll make night the mirror of my mind,  
And so divorce her image from my sight  
That memory, like a tomb once well inscribed,

Which time has rendered smooth,

Will lose her record, and living she'll be dead.

*Enter Splinters*

*Splinters.* Did ever a fool have so rare a chase after another? There is my asteroid, so blinded by his own light that he cannot see me. I tell thee, King, thou art a poor calculator for all thy neck-strainings o' heaven. If thou thinkst to lose me by hiding in this cabbage-patch, thou'lt have to turn into a jimson-weed and make me hold my nose and run away. Go to a fool and say "teach me" for I tell thee a fool's thy best go-along. He'll keep thee from jaundice as a string of camphor or witch-root from disease. Retain me and thou'lt not be seldom of a laugh. And by all the rules, laughter seasons sorrow as a fool's wit regulates a wise man's wisdom. Follow me, Monarch. Wink when I smile and call it night when I yawn. I'll blow wisdom in thine ear if the wind sits not at thine elbow. But my heart is very much killed to hear my oracle mumbling to the stars.

*Melmoth.* Idiot, avaunt! Thou'lt drive me to extremes!

*Splinters.* Oh, King, thou drivest to extremes those that love thee most, and tak'st to thy bosom those that mean thee ill. Thou shouldst not do it.

*Melmoth.* Speakest thou of love, poor fool?

*Splinters.* I do, poor King. Language hath no business otherwise.

*Melmoth.* How canst *thou* love, thou misshapen thing?

*Splinters.* He loves that lives, and lives that loves.

*Melmoth.* Lovest thou anyone, poor fool?

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*Splinters.* The whole world, poor king,—I love thee.

*Melmoth.* The whole world . . . the whole world . . .

*Splinters.* Much better than thou lovest thyself.

*Melmoth.* Hast thou a mind to assert the honesty of thy word?

*Splinters.* Command me, king. Bid me swallow myself; I'll do't. Say anything. Say "Splinters, make nothing of thyself". Say "Splinters, go hang thyself;" I'll do't, by my scab!

*Melmoth.* Do it, then, fool.

*Splinters.* Forthwith! At once! Directly! If you discover me, king, I'll not be preserved; nor raise a column in my interim. He that hangs himself gets neither to heaven nor to hell.

*(Exeunt severally.)*

SCENE 3—*The same.*

*Evening advanced.*

*Enter Dolora, Ladies and Courtiers.*

*Dolora.* Here let us linger. (*Dolora is seated.*)

*A Courtier.* How fair is life that wakes to such a night!

Here could I linger 'til th' unhappy world  
Creeps in, at dawn, upon my reverie,  
Dispersing the music from my soul!

See how yon starry fire-flies witch to us  
From the frame of heaven as tho they  
yearned

To this sphere as we to theirs. Is not

This scene in harmony with things more  
felt

Than understood?

*Lady.* A night of poetry and song!

*Another Lady.* Of love, and thoughts of love,  
and memories.

*Dolora.* The night is fair, but let the heart be  
heavy,

Then stars may show most beautifully  
bright,

And love may fly to ecstasies of song,

And song to love,—it hath no charm.

*A Courtier.* How now, sweet lady? Thou  
art weary.

*Second Courtier.* Or malcontent?

*Third Courtier.* Or loved?

*Dolora.* In sooth, a measure of each and much  
of none. Pray, friends, stray you some distance  
farther and return yourselves to the palace.

*Courtier.* But come with us.

*Dolora.* Nay, let me remain.

*Lady.* Then keep you safe the while.

*Courtier.* Madam, we leave you. Good night.

*All.* Good night.

*Dolora.* Good night to you all. (*Exeunt all  
but Dolora.*)

*Enter Cedrielle*

*Cedrielle.* Dolora, you seek to be too much  
alone of late—

*Dolora.* You come from my father?

*Cedrielle.* From his physician, madam; a sprit  
of a man, whose wife should be a goody-gammer to  
live with him.

*Dolora.* What was his advice?

*Cedrielle.* Without coaxing he would pass for a mummy. All he had a tongue for was "better, ma'am, better" like a spitting cat. What, does Dolora sigh so profoundly? Then is the world in love or out of it. Both they say, make us sad and pale, and thin and fretful—

*Dolora.* That I am not gay, there is cause enow.

*Cedrielle.* I doubt it not. Yet be not silent overmuch. Such thoughts as you may think on gracing with your speech may in a measure, like tears from the eye, relieve the pain of the heart. Communication of any deep-set woe channels it from us; denied expression, it is but suppressed, not lost; for sorrow must spend itself, else, like flames that still survive in embers, 'twill up again. But let us rather speak of things nearer to our pleasures. There's the marquis, madam.

*Dolora.* My brother Esmund! Ah, me, unhappy!

*Cedrielle.* No, I mean, St. Francis.

*Dolora.* Oh let alone!

*Cedrielle.* But, madam, you did favor him once.

*Dolora.* Once,—perhaps.

*Cedrielle.* And now?

*Dolora.* Now has the advantage of time and discretion. Indeed, Cedrielle, it was a foolish fancy of yesterday, which today tutors me from, and tomorrow will make me forget.

*Cedrielle.* 'Twill grieve him much to know it, madam.

*Dolora.* Wherefore, Cedrielle? Mine was not the word or smile or manner of address to encourage him. I looked not pleased when he was wont

to flatter, nor grieved when he affected, nor followed him his fashions.

*Cedrielle.* Yet why should you thus ignore him? He is deserving of much earnest consideration, being a man of no mean qualities.

*Dolora.* If that were so. ; . .

*Cedrielle.* He is a soldier, madam; a statesman; a lover.

*Dolora.* Tush.

*Cedrielle.* The pink of chivalry; the choice flower of the court.

*Dolora.* (*Deridingly.*) "Choice flower!"

*Cedrielle.* Nor has the promise of his steel cheated itself.

*Dolora.* (*Suddenly.*) Cedrielle, it is plain, you love him!

*Cedrielle.* I, madam?

*Dolora.* Do you not?

*Cedrielle.* I, madam?

*Dolora.* Then why do you speak of him to me so approvingly, and of things intrusive to this moment which is one of grief.

*Cedrielle.* Indeed, madam, if you are anywise perturbed in spirits I doubt not but the King's to blame!

*Dolora.* Cedrielle!

*Cedrielle.* Nay, do I speak false?

*Dolora.* (*Indignant.*) If you should speak at all!

*Cedrielle.* Dolora, be not vexed. I speak not selfishly in my own concern; only am I jealous of yours. You love the king, madam, do you not?

*Dolora.* Cedrielle!

*Cedrielle.* Nay, do you not?—frankly, now!

*Dolora.* What then? What then, Cedrielle?

*Cedrielle.* That were well if love were love alone. But here is rank, ambition, policy, wealth, and over it all the world's cruel eye like a Cyclops, looking down inquiringly. And those, it seems, untutored in the craft that shields, must suffer for the rest. *Dolora*, there are courses in the wind that are not free; then how can we, in choice, without injury, expect escaping from an only course to which we are bound. You love the king; then it were well if you could marry him; but that's denied; then—

*Dolora.* Then?—

*Cedrielle.* Love must find a way to save itself. Now there's St. Francis hath a passion for you. Let us say, even as you do, that he affects you not; but that's no matter. We rarely ever marry those we love, and those we love and marry, as a consequence, we find we do not love. 'Tis like that something which each of us adds to the reality when it becomes a memory or an expectation. And, in like vein, the bonds that fetter love are those which make them tire. Take Francis for thine honor; be his wife; then will you shut the inquisitive eye of the world; then may you love the king with best assurance. Marriage is so oft a happy robe behind which we, virtuous women, hide our sweet sins. And besides, husbands never know what fools their wives make of them. 'Tis thus, *Dolora*, that we, being opposed by fortune, avenge ourselves on life.

*Dolora.* Oh, Cedrielle, and do you think I would yield to such dark practices?

*Cedrielle.* Why not, when so much happiness

depends upon it? They are dark only when you see them so. Circumstances make things proper or improper.

*Dolora.* This blunt reasoning makes you less my sympathizer.

*Cedrielle.* Nay, more your friend, *Dolora*.

*Dolora.* Oh, I am sure of it, you do advise me wrongly.

*Cedrielle.* But safely, madam. Oh, 'tis fine folly to mistake the world; there's art and benefit in understanding it. Those that miss it, have for their consolation, shame and misery.

*Dolora.* You are cruel, *Cedrielle*. It cannot be as you say. Indeed, it cannot.

*Cedrielle.* Alas, I say but little of so much that can be said! Oh, friend, I myself have been bitterly taught that the awakening to the truth is much more to be dreaded than the long sweet sleep. Love, you must know, is more than roses and soft sighs and starry nights. And the world, *Dolora*, is not as the saints and angels dream of it, but as man has made it.

*Dolora.* Is there then no virtue in the world? No! No! Yours must be a false teaching, *Cedrielle*. I cannot and dare not follow it.

*Cedrielle.* False, perhaps, but necessary.

*Dolora.* Cease, I prithee, cease. You make me despair! Oh, I am weary of looking on the struggle and crossing threads.

*Enter Royce*

*Royce.* A fair good evening to you, ladies. How does the Duke, your father?

*Dolora.* I thank you; hardly well, my lord.

*Royce.* It gives me pain to hear it.

*Cedrielle.* There is no cause, though, for alarm, God wot.

*Royce.* Indeed, there should not be. And 'tis a great happiness, madam, to know that his majesty has recalled his decree.

*Dolora.* Do you bring news from Esmund?

*Royce.* Ay, madam; he is impatient that you come to him.

*Dolora.* Will that be possible?

*Royce.* Acquaint us but with the hour and we shall create the opportunity.

*Dolora.* Then tomorrow night, this time, God willing.

*Royce.* Excellent, madam.

*Enter St. Francis*

*St. Francis.* Good evening, ladies. You make the beauty of this night complete. Royce? Remind me to speak to you of things. Come you from the Duke? How does he fare?

*Royce.* I am on my way to visit him.

*St. Francis.* I would inquire after his health.

*Cedrielle.* The Duke is better, my lord.

*St. Francis.* I rejoice to hear it. (*To Dolora.*) And you, lady?

*Dolora.* Indifferently well, sir.

*St. Francis.* No better, madam? I am grieved. (*Aside to Royce.*) You have received news from the Prince?

*Royce.* (*Aside to Francis.*) If we had, then you should know of it.

*St. Francis.* True, true, (*Aloud.*) Eh, shall we to the Duke?

*Royce.* Let us go, if you please.

*St. Francis.* Ladies, your pardon.

(*Aside to Royce.*) You are not offended?

*Royce.* (*Aside to St. Francis.*) Wherefore?

*St. Francis.* (*Aloud.*) I follow you at once.

*Royce.* Convey to the Duke my sentiments. (*Exit Royce.*)

(*To Cedrielle.*) Will you give me leave?

*Cedrielle.* (*Withdrawing.*) Willingly, my lord.

*Dolora.* Cedrielle, be good to remain.

*St. Francis.* I pray, madam, we be alone. My words are of such character, they were best said in confidence of two.

*Dolora.* I am sorry, then, that I must be unkind—

*Cedrielle.* But, madam—!

*Dolora.* This to deny you, sir.

*Cedrielle.* Dolora, if you please—

*Dolora.* Peace. Will you resume your seat?

*St. Francis.* Madam, I am more put out than hurt.

And I take it—your present disposition—

As a difficulty in the course

Of many that are thrown in the way

To discourage effort. But I hope, madam,

For the time when you will be both pleased

And earnest to receive me.

Where ambition rests, 'tis hard to tell,

But it perches high.—Farewell. (*Exit St. Francis.*)

*Dolora.* Farewell. Ah, I would 'twere ne'er "good morrow!" Cedrielle, there are very few deserve the name of man; those that do, we fail to recognize. I cannot love St. Francis; he hath not that quality in him. Rather, he repulses me.

*Cedrielle.* Why, madam, you'd put a mask on fortune herself. Were Providence so faithful to my needs, I'd be content.

*Dolora.* Thou hast said it, Cedrielle; my content is not thine. Each heart must estimate its own. But speak no more of anything. I am so, I would I could depart this beautiful and sorry world, as quietly and gently as a sail sinks below the horizon.

*Cedrielle.* These are naughty thoughts, Dolora. Will you come in? The night is progressed far, and there's no comfort in the open.

*Dolora.* No. Go you in alone. Self-communion awhile will put to rest those tumultuous currents that make each day a maelstrom.

*Cedrielle.* Good night, then. Tell not thy secrets to the stars, for they'll betray thee. These are times we dare not even trust to Heaven. (*Exit Cedrielle.*)

*Dolora takes up instrument and begins playing.*

*Enter Melmoth.*

*Melmoth.* Why does the music so affect my soul

That it would be responsive? What spirit is't

Which leads me here without my senses' will

Opposing? Oh, I would break away

And cannot. Why is this? and that my soul

Aspires towards her in all the terror

Of its loneliness? Oh, why am I thus! thus!

And not as I should be!

*Dolora.* Melmoth!

*Melmoth.* There's the cause! Now yield to it,  
Melmoth,  
In that perverseness of your being  
Which strives against the utmost will;  
Yield and be dragged down to where  
Thou fearest to think on.

*Dolora.* Melmoth, I pray you—

*Melmoth.* Oh, what's to do?

*Dolora.* Have you come at last, my lord?

*Melmoth.* Oh, what's to do?

Sustain the vast, unshouldered globe of  
heaven?

Drag the ancient firmament adown?

Confound the 'stablished forces of all na-  
ture?

Rush in amongst them till they turn life to  
chaos?

And if to cry, where then, to heaven or  
hell?

*Dolora.* Melmoth, hear me!

*Melmoth.* Nay, but hear me! And wretched  
be thy soul, if thou failst me now.

Depart this presence ever, that thine image,

Like the shadow o'er my soul which thou

Hast hung there, tending to remain,

May pass to death.

*Dolora.* Oh, I'll not believe thee, Melmoth.

These are words

Prompted by some drear and dreadful night-  
mare

Of the sense that has thy life enslaved.

What is their unholy origin? Tell me.

Thou art sick, Melmoth. Thou'rt con-  
sumed

By something wild and superstrange  
 That must dispute thy manhood. Surely,  
 This is it. Oh, speak to me, Melmoth!  
 Hast thou no word to offer me in kind-  
 ness

Or in charity? Cast me not thus from your  
 true confidence.

Let me linger near thee.

*Melmoth.* No, no, stay not to answer me  
 (*Aside.*) Oh, fie, fie!

*Dolora.* I would not stay, Melmoth, if this  
 your wish found echo

In your heart. I would go away;

Nay, I would seek those distances

Where the winds, sweeping another heaven,

Kiss not the stars. So far away,

So unfamiliar to this hour of time,

No thought could follow flight. But I  
 know,

And clearly is it given me to know,

That I am as dearly necessary to thy being

As thou art to mine. (*Embraces him.*)

*Melmoth.* Great resolves, where are you now?  
 And thou

Sustaining might with all your curbs and  
 checks?

Oh, how weak's the fear of thee, Oh doom,  
 Oh vast and pitiless doom

That lasts to everness, against one moment

Of this mortal love!

*Dolora.* This is Melmoth, self; the other was  
 not he.

Tell me that you love me.

Tell me that in your deep heart

You have found a love that times and spheres  
 Yet unwritten, will not know to value,  
 Or knowing, not believe! Tell me, Mel-  
 moth, that I may hear and know.

*Melmoth.* So, I love thee.

And I will kiss thee on these lips of truth,  
 Sweet, sweet, Dolora!

For thou,—thou art the echo of my soul  
 Which has no voice without thee.

And thou art fair! fair above the thought  
 That can imagine thee; above the love  
 That can be given thee. So I love thee.

(*They embrace.*)

*Curtain*

SCENE 4—*The same.*

*Later in the night.*

*The Palace is lit up.*

*Music heard from within. Sounds of merriment.*

*Moonlight. Clouds.*

*Enter Brabant and Berkeley.*

*Brabant.* I had thought to find our friends,  
 Dohlgryn and Royce, before us.

*Berkeley.* Very like, they will be here anon.  
 Upon what hour should they expect us here?

*Brabant.* About the stroke of eight.

*Berkeley.* 'Tis later now.

*Brabant.* Didst count the clock?

*Berkeley.* Ay, and heard it welcome eight. But  
 'tis a goodly while the even hour was struck.

*Brabant.* I did not think the time so much ad-  
 vanced. How the moon rolls to-night, Berkeley.  
 She hath a worried and a wearied countenance.

*Berkeley.* From looking on this earth she's grown so pale and melancholy.

*Brabant.* Or from contemplation of herself.

*Berkeley.* What a history is hers! Ah! would we knew more that we might wonder less—

*Brabant.* Didst hear of Austria?

*Berkeley.* No. How were the Ambassadors received? Not well?

*Brabant.* Neither well nor wisely, but in such a manner as delicately touched their pride. They left in anger and in haste, and Austria rebuked, becomes the friend to the foes of her enemy. Thereon may we build another hope for John.

*Berkeley.* The Prince is not advised?

*Brabant.* No. We shall first learn more of the condition of State and then acquaint him of it together with such matters as require communication. But they are not yet come.

*Berkeley.* Punctuality's among the lost virtues, it seems.

*Brabant.* True. Time is the universal creditor who lends to every man. But those that pass the margin of their debts, and neglect it after, soon find themselves adrift in bankruptcy.

*Berkeley.* We'll trust our friends will rise above the tide and float securely.

*Brabant.* So let us think.

*Berkeley.* What final hopes may we draw from our enterprise?

*Brabant.* The hope that justice sits in. Error's temporal.

Since Melmoth, thro' his tyranny and reign,  
Has fallen from the pedestal of favor  
On which his heroism perched him high,

There's confidence takes the place of promise.

And if you, and I, and many others  
Fraternal to the most dear object,  
Will act in silence and security,  
And see each day more wealthy than the last

With earnest effort, we cannot fail.

*Berkeley.* Then have we all to hope for.  
For none within the Prince's confidence  
Is anything but conscious of the weight  
And trust of his position, each ready  
To sustain his part.

*Brabant.* I am assured 'tis so. Such mettle as our Prince's draws to it only the finer filings.

*Berkeley.* Here are our confederates at last!  
*Enter Royce and Dohlgrin.*

*Brabant.* You are late, my lords, but we greet you most heartily.

*Royce.* Ours is the fault, gentlemen. We missed the hour on the concourse. And we grieve the more to have detained you since the nature of your news must hang upon the clock.

*Brabant.* It does.

*Dohlgrin.* This should be news indeed!

*Berkeley.* Here's something to fret our swords: France and Britain have both given pledge to render assistance.

*Royce and Dohlgrin.* You give us great joy, friends!

*Brabant.* The cohorts are already joining arms. The Prince is now impatient for a fair conception of the strength of Melmoth's forces as opposed to those of faithful promise recorded on this paper here.

*Royce.* Give it to me. (*Takes paper from Brabant.*)

*Dohlgrin.* Come nearer to the light, Royce.

*Royce.* There is light enough to read by, here. (*Scans paper.*)

*Dohlgrin.* (*To Brabant.*) Here are those requested by the Prince. (*Offers paper.*)

*Brabant.* Oh! forsooth.

*Dohlgrin.* When was it last you saw the Prince?

*Brabant.* But two days gone. If you would know his tone,

We left him proud and certain of the outcome.

*Dohlgrin.* Where's a better word?

*Royce.* This paper, as best as I can make out, doth mark a total of twenty thousand . . .

*Brabant.* That is but half. Please to observe the other.

*Royce.* One record was all you gave me.

*Brabant.* Oh pardon, I am much forgetful. (*Takes out second paper from bosom.*)

Here!

*Royce.* (*After studying both papers.*) Even then we number no more than half the ready forces of the kingdom.

*Brabant and Berkeley.* No more?

*Dohlgrin.* Unless we count on those yet unacknowledged. Were Esmund free—

*Royce.* It has been learned that several cohorts in the line are fast on joining forces with the Prince.

*Dohlgrin.* Some of which are doubtful.

*Royce.* These with Esmund's liberation, should be won over.

The greater part are pledged in the King's favor.

All things weighed there's no discouragement.

*Berkeley.* There were none, even were they less promising.

*Brabant.* Royce, several come this way. Shall we be detained?

*Dohlgrin.* Stay! But let it not seem that we are in private converse.

*Royce.* Best, go! For once suspicion attaches to ourselves, the best designs must suffer.

*Brabant.* That's so. Haste, haste, Berkeley!

*Berkeley.* Pass we into the banquet hall. Tomorrow we shall further treat of this.

*(Exeunt Berkeley and Brabant.)*

*Royce.* The time is come when Esmund must be out.

There's holy need of him, dear Dohlgrin.

We'll lay our plans to-night.

*Dohlgrin.* Even so. But who are these?

*(Enter De Forest, Steel and Edwin, singing.)*

"Who loseth his sins is a great gainer;

Wine and women work our end;

Happy, they say, is the abstainer,—

*Steele.* But who the devil can abstain?"

*De Forest.* Peace, awhile. Who's there?

*Steele.* What, Royce and Dohlgrin? Up, up, for shame!

*Royce.* Good even, my lords. I am glad to intercept your haste.

*Steele.* Do not, dear sir, we're hasting, hurrying, hankering, scurrying.

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*Edwin.* Soft, Richard.

*De Forest.* What is it you would have of us, my lords?

*Steele.* We can give nothing but our good faith, and that's frail.

*Royce.* Will you waste a moment in our behalf and relieve us of a care?

*Steele.* Hark, hark, sirs! How the glasses chime, sir! Come along, sirs, or let us pass.

*Dohlgrin.* We'll not suffer to detain them then.

*De Forest.* Oh, hush! Richard! There'll be enough to go you double and carry you home. (*To Royce and Dohlgrin.*) We are at your service, my lords.

*Royce.* If so it please you, convey our regrets to the King, should he inquire.

*De Forest.* Most gladly. We'd do a better service for the saying. I know your worth, my lords.

*Royce.* We thank you. A pleasant time to you, gentlemen.

*De Forest.* I'm sorry you will not attend.

*Royce.* We have special duties to perform, and must deny ourselves.

*De Forest.* I do not doubt it. Well, good night.

*Steele.* Ay, good night—to us. We'll pledge you in our cups. (*Withdrawing.*)

*Edwin.* (*Singing.*) "There's one I love above the stars—"

*Steele.* (*Singing.*) "But not above the wine!"

Good night, good night, we'll pledge you in our cups.

*Dohlgrin.* Royce, I think—

*Royce.* My friends, have we your good will to

Speak to you again of a certain business?

*De Forest.* Ay, what is it, sir?

*Dohlgrin.* Not now, eh, Royce?

*Royce.* Tomorrow afternoon or evening, sirs—  
not to-night.

*De Forest.* Very well, my lords. Our wish  
is your pleasure.

*(Exeunt De Forest, Steele and Edwin.)*

*Royce.* They were one time Esmund's companions,  
and may assist us in his release.

*Dohlgrin.* Well bethought. I know them.  
They are men, generous of heart, tho' sometimes  
their freedom overleaps their discretion. But excess  
teaches moderation; that's a fact.

*Royce.* Oh, I have no word of censure. They  
are, it seems, happier than we, and therefore all the  
more faithful to life's purpose. In them as in all  
else we discover truth. The world's one grand  
and interwoven moral in which all things and deeds  
are comprehended. One source, one spirit, and one  
expression! Each of us is caring for his thread,  
weaving it across to intricate designs and interlacing  
with a thousand others, like tiny currents that run  
together finally, creating one mighty stream. *(They  
are about to go.)*

*Dohlgrin.* Hark, Royce! Here is one whose  
cautious step would escape the hearing. See, is it  
not Dolora?

*Royce.* Why, so it is!

*Dohlgrin.* I wonder she is here. Will she to  
the banquet?

*Royce.* I'll not think so. Women do not grace  
the banquets here.

*Enter Dolora*

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*Dohlgrin.* There's a paragon of womankind! For her sake alone, Royce, I could almost wish our project tardy progress. Her love for him that is our common enemy, improves our own.

*Royce.* I do well conceive you. Such worth we cannot estimate by parallel, for then it hath none. (*To Dolora.*) God save you gracious lady!

*Dolora.* Oh, kind gentlemen, dear friends, I thank you. Do you know if his Majesty be within?

*Dohlgrin.* So please you, the sennet has not sounded.

*Dolora.* Then they've begun without him?

*Dohlgrin.* I doubt not, but 'twas his wish.

*Dolora.* Then he will pass this way?

*Royce.* We are ignorant, madam. Very like he will.

*Dohlgrin.* If he be in his chamber—but here he comes himself. (*To Royce.*) 'Twould be unpleasant to have us encounter.

(*Dolora looks to left.*)

*Royce.* (*To Dohlgrin.*) That's so. Madam, we take our leave.

*Dolora.* (*Not looking towards them.*) Good night. Good night.

*Royce.* She loves the king too truly to be happy. Her sorrow speaks upon her face.

*Dohlgrin.* Alas! too eloquent. (*Exeunt Dohlgrin and Royce.*)

*Dolora.* He comes like Woden sunken in his dreams,

Despairing of the worlds.

What Norns have shown him the enchanted well

Of whose waters he had drunk the drop

Fatal of too much knowledge?  
 What price was thine to give, unhappy man?  
 Oh, that the mind could comprehend the  
 heart—

Its vague, yet all too perfect visitations!

*Melmoth enters slowly.*

*Melmoth.* Rocks be founded as this vault, no  
 earthquake

Shall shake you!

*Dolora.* Dear, my lord—

*Melmoth.* Spirit of my thought, why art thou  
 here?

Hence from my sight! What art thou?

What's thy skill?

What hellish darkness gave thee origin?

Tell me what thou art?

*Dolora.* Oh what's upon thee, Melmoth?  
 Who's he that poisons thee to my desires?

*Melmoth.* Pass and speak not once!

*Dolora.* I'll speak and thou art bound to hear  
 me!

'Tis that thou lovest me better than I myself  
 Can adequately tell myself, or thou to me,  
 Which makes me bold to ask, nay, to de-  
 mand,

Why thou wilt thus betray thy nobler na-  
 ture.

Some deep impossible hold upon thy soul  
 Drives thee from thyself. Then let me  
 know;

For I am thine, more than this mortal ves-  
 ture

Will let reveal. I am thine! thine!

*Melmoth.* Oh, begone! This torture cannot

much the more endure;  
Or else, I'll not.

*Dolora.* Melmoth, I must know!  
By our love I conjure you to tell me.  
And if that tie have not the veritable root—  
Be not dear enough to claim thee to me,  
Then indeed, keep silent.

*Melmoth.* Oh, still be great, Dolora! Not,  
not, exacting!  
If thou wouldst hurry on the dreadful doom,  
Stay and be the cause.  
It cannot be love that cannot die for it,  
And that I ask not.

*Dolora.* Nay, but ask it and you'll not need  
again.

Ask a greater thing, Melmoth, that I,  
With thine own instrument and mine own  
hand,

Thy dear blood let;  
And I will do it, failing then myself.  
For how much greater is my love, than is  
My womanly soul that can give instance of 't.  
Then how much rather death than this blind  
torment—

This taking to the heart and casting from  
it—

This starving and wasting of the soul!

Oh, speak once!

And let me use your blade upon my heart,  
For thus is death most sacred. (*A pause.*)

Why is Melmoth silent?

(*Draws blade from Melmoth's belt. He takes  
it from her.*)

Oh, teach me, Melmoth!

For I am simple in my understanding.

*Melmoth.* Untaught I must love thee most.

Time will be when I will tell thee all,  
And you will hate me.

But spare me now the rendering. 'Tis such  
a thought

Must make dumb in utterance and leave me  
mad.

Spare me this once, and leave me. Go,  
Dolora.

*Dolora.* I go, Melmoth. Good night. And  
I'll not haunt thee more. . . . good  
night. . . .

'Til from thine own necessity thou'lt feel  
To come to me. . . . good night.

*Melmoth.* (*Dreamily.*) Good night. (*Exit  
Dolora.*)

Oh, I have wandered in a mist!

Stars shine out and teach direction to my  
soul!

And from your holy and unlettered dis-  
tances,

Speak to me!

Light, light, more light! I'm lost upon the  
waves

That heave in the still vast night without  
an end,

And carry me afar

Ever to furthering bournes where sits and  
waits,

In spectral loneliness, like doom's own phan-  
tom,

Dimmest Uncertainty.

Oh Dolora, Dolora, you have pressed upon  
me

A bewildering thought which rings most fatal! (*Draws dagger unwittingly.*)

My manhood is entricked. I feel the gravity  
Of my inner being giving way

To a chaos of ungovernable revolt.

Giant longings seek their natal fires

And call to nature in half despairing tones,

Deep from the dungeon-keep of my heart,  
'Out,' 'Out!' and others, 'Stay,' 'Hold!'

*Curtain*

SCENE 5.

*Fore-stage.*

*Before the Banquet Hall.*

*Through the portieres a glimpse of the banquet hall can be gotten.*

*Discovered Servingmen.*

*First Servant.* I tell thee, when wine sinks words swim. Mark the courtiers. There is a marquis of the first water drowning in his own tank. My word, as I am a God-fearing man, these markees, ducs and lords from France and Hogoland have the very devil in them, being such by heredity, or becoming such by necessity.

*Second Servant.* Say you so!

*First Servant.* Fei fo fum! If there be truth in wine, and, as the saying goes, truth be sober, then are our bibbers judges and temperate men fibbers. My father—Got wot, he was a well-meaning man, albeit only an edifier of clothes, lofty in itself, gave me, his only male sprit, who was, to speak properly,

a distinguished unit in a mass,—there being twelve daughters besides me, which misfortune, I have grave fear, brought him so early to his final lay out—this same father, who was, as I said, a well-meaning man despite everything, gave me a better breeding, hark you, with all his daughters—the Lord preserve them with their mates—than any show present.

*Second Servant.* I make me no doubt 'tis so. But how comes it they've begun feasting and the King not here?

*First Servant.* Why, he must have told them: "‘fall to’, ‘tuck in’, ‘imbibe’ without me."

*Second Servant.* Say you so!

*First Servant.* Why, look you, our king is as full of surprises as a lover is of lies. 'Twas only yesternorn as I was doing service with the wine, his majesty inquired of me an my stock were prospering. "Marry", quoth I, "you mean my wife, your majesty." "Marry", quoth he, "I mean your brood." "Marry," quoth I, begging his grace's humility, "I have not any!" "Marry," quoth he, "then go and get thee some, and be your wife issueless go divorce her and wive thee with another. There must be soldiers for my army." Seeing 'tis our king that tells me this I have already found me a new rib and forsaken the old. What say you to this all?

*Second Servant.* To my mind, he is a wise king. An he counselled me so, I'd bless him most heartily. I have a wife . . .

*First Servant.* But let's not grow idle. Here comes the Master of the Cellar. (*First servant goes up stage.*)

*Enter Master of Cellar.*

*Master of Cellar.* More Burgundy for the third table. Make haste! Why stand you there fiddle-fuddling?

*Second Servant.* We taste, master, we taste.

*Master of Cellar.* What say you there?

*Second Servant.* We haste, master, we haste.

*Master of Cellar.* Come, this is no time to loiter.

(*Exit Second Servant. Enter Third Servant.*)

*Third Servant.* The Roussillon's about gone, master.

*Master of Cellar.* Well, let it go for all my tasting. The beverage is much too heavy for these light wits; and in some of them the oil's above the water. Ere the night is wasted there'll be many a pretty sight to mark, and hold one's tongue over. Wine wears no breeches, I tell you, and I doubt not but it shows a man as he is. Let us say, as seeing as how it is, a person is normal, sober and therefore wise. Now place a flagon before him. Mark developments. The first glass is a sail trimmer; it makes him buoyant. The second will make him good-natured, neighborly and cheery; the third, familiar and doting,—familiar and doting, I said.

*Third Servant.* I'm listening, master, "familiar and doting!"

*Master of Cellar.* The third, familiar and doting; the fourth will begin to fire him; the fifth makes him a lion, restless and keen; the sixth, saucy and peevish; art thou listening?—

*Third Servant.* Ay, ay, master, the seventh.

*Master of Cellar.* The seventh!

*Third Servant.* (*Hastily.*) The eighth, master.

*Master of Cellar.* The sixth, you dog! The sixth!

*Third Servant.* Ay, the sixth, as you say, master, the sixth,—as you say.

*Master of Cellar.* The seventh will make him giddy and foolish; the eighth sees him a chattering ape; the ninth a swine, wallowing in his own mire.

*Third Servant.* And how make you of those that stay sober after the tenth?

*Master of Cellar.* We make nothing of them, for in their case it is simply the pouring out of one flask into another. Can a bottle of wine ever be guzzled, eh? (*Nudging Third Servant.*)

*Third Servant.* No.

*Master of Cellar.* Neither can they. 'But we must be hustling. The king will be here in no time. (*Exeunt both.*)

*The portieres are drawn and discover:*

SCENE 6—*The Banquet Hall. Brilliantly lighted. Tables decked. Some guests are at the table, drinking and toasting. Among them are Pellas, St. Francis, Lords from Britain, Lords from France, and representatives of other countries.*

*Enter Berkeley and Brabant.*

*Berkeley.* (*Signifying to a group of men.*) Is not that my Lord of France?

*Brabant.* That is he. Let's to acknowledge him. Our commission can be given over in less than several words.

(*St. Francis is seen to rise from table and come forward.*)

*Berkeley.* Here is St. Francis approaching.

*Brabant.* Look not to him!

*St. Francis.* Hail, dear comrades! How do you this gay night? My sight, wasted in the search

of you, returns with your return!

*Berkeley.* (*Dryly.*) We are pleased to see you, my lord.

*St. Francis.* Your absence should have made you rich; eh, my lords?

*Berkeley.* What does my lord mean?

*St. Francis.* (*Sarcastically.*) What? Oh—when Tarquin fled from Rome—

*Brabant.* Oh, that! The Prince is well, but weak. More, there's nothing.

*St. Francis.* (*Disappointed.*) Indeed? I awaited better. But we'll wine together, no, my lords? Let's be of this merriment that's careless of all cares. I owe you a double pledge.

*Pellas.* Pause, Francis. Is not your place with us?

*St. Francis.* Oh, pardon, sire, the advantage is to me. I meant to be near you soon. (*To Brabant and Berkeley.*) Your pardon, both. (*Turning to Pellas.*) Are these my lords from Britain?

*Pellas.* These are our noble lords. Study to be of service to them, sir. They are men of rare and deserving qualities.

(*Berkeley and Brabant in the meanwhile go over to the Lord of France's table.*)

*St. Francis.* (*Greeting the lords.*) My father's praise does not overleap your worth. (*Following Berkeley with his eyes.*) I know you both, my lords, and hope soon for better entertainment from you.

*Lords.* That is our best desire.

*St. Francis.* No better than my best. (*He goes up stage and joins Berkeley and Brabant.*)

*Lords.* (*To Pellas.*) We are not deceived in your son. He hardly contradicts what his fame has

prepared us for.

*Pellas.* I am glad you take him so. Better exchange of thoughts will better your mutual respect. (*To the general company.*) My lords, be not given over to the serious. Give to the hour its forthcoming, and do not save the wine. Let this night be sweet to every moment, nor so soon forgot.

*A Lord.* What may detain his majesty from our midst?

*Pellas.* We cannot set upon the unusual. But be satisfied, my lords, his grace will attend us presently. Drink, gentlemen!

*France.* Your health, my Lord of Britain.

*Britain.* To you, France! I drink to our mutual understanding, may it ever be undisturbed.

*France.* To our mutual love, may it know no cessation.

*All drink. General applause. Sennet.*

*Enter Melmoth. Acclamations.*

*Melmoth.* (*To trumpeters at the door.*) Peace, Peace! Will you be silent?

*Pellas.* Accept these fair acclaims, most royal liege,

As the general expression of the company,  
Which is our honor.

The noble lords of the several states assembled,

Pledge you their fidelity, amity and love,  
The which be gracious to acknowledge.

*Melmoth.* Thank them more than once. What's here, *Pellas*? What special thing is it to-night? 'Tis hard to think. Why these loud ventures, these rich brocades, these frames, these fashions, these

hangings and ornaments, that by their overness make the virtue of the eye a burden upon the sense? I cannot think.

*Pellas.* My lord, you know full well. This banquet—to our honor.

*Melmoth.* Ay, and what will come of it? (*Laughs strangely.*) You need not answer. Where's the wine that I may pledge the lords?

*Pellas.* (*Anxiously.*) Here, my lord.

*Melmoth.* That's so . . . let me see . . .  
. . . let me see . . .

*Pellas.* (*To the company.*) Gentlemen, your present favor. (*To Melmoth.*) Will it please your majesty to grace the table? Here's your place.

*Melmoth.* (*Approaching table.*) Pour out the wine. There always should be wine. 'Tis the nectar of the mortal gods, and makes them live.

(*Page pours out wine.*)

*Pellas.* So it please you, here's your place, your majesty.

*Melmoth.* (*Abstractly.*) It filters through despair leaving no less to settle at the bottom.

*Pellas.* (*Anxiously.*) I have not heard you, my lord.

*First Lord.* What says his majesty?

*Second Lord.* Nothing ordinary. It seems to me, he is not so much with us, to-night, as beyond us.

*Melmoth.* It eases the bonds of resolve, the making of,

And the carrying out. Therein the will,  
Into an unsufficing sleep, suffers the brain;  
And this unraveled state breeds things

Which the fresh, uncoated senses think not  
of.

Then there must be wine, and wine enough  
To clinch all waking.

*(Takes up cup and sets it down again. All  
the company do the same.)*

Pah! There's living here and life in noth-  
ing!

The struggle's in the waking and the world;  
The tossing and the fretting and the stir.

Then, to sleep, and lose the sense of all,  
Waving them far from the soldierly soul  
And gaining the while by recess.

Sleep! This vessel cannot give of it, Pellas;  
Nor can it take from me the unhealthy fan-  
cies

That inhabit my daily dreams.

Thought, World, Love, and Excellent Ex-  
citement!—

Who knows what chance may work or let  
alone?— *(Pause.)*

Ho! Who'll drink with me, what! *(Takes  
up cup.)*

*First Lord.* Our King is either merry or mad.

*Second Lord.* See, he sets down his cup again.

*Melmoth.* *(Passes hand over his brow.)* Why,

I cannot reach the cup but to my lips

And then must set it down.

There's something weighs upon us here, and  
stops

The effort of the heart. What is it? . . .

. Oh! *(All rise.)*

*First Lord.* *(To Pellas.)* Address his majesty,  
your lordship.

*Second Lord.* We seem unsuited to this hour;  
I pray we go.

*Pellas.* Gentlemen, be composed. The worries of the state have told upon his majesty. Resume your places, honored guests. This cannot survive the moment. (*To Melmoth.*) My liege, I entreat you, recall yourself. There's nothing here, nor that which should perplex you. Believe not you cannot drink.

*Melmoth.* Nay, I cannot, though my breath be like the blistering sirroc, and my throat, the Libyan Desert. I cannot drink!

*Pellas.* This is most strange. How is it with you, my lord? You are not wont to be affected so. Your guests would claim their host. They are most anxious for your cheer. Speak to them.

*Melmoth.* What's this before me, ha! . . . 'Tis not the eye so much which catches at it, as the seeing soul.

*First Lord.* What is there most evident, is conscience, not matter. He speaks to a sick fancy, nothing else. See now!

(*A vision of Satan appears to Melmoth.*)

*Melmoth.* Why, thou com'st not now! The time's unripe,  
And thou look'st green and sickly to the eye  
That beholds thee ere thy moment. Dissolve again,  
And incorporate thyself with what thou art,  
The Topheth-breathing air.—  
Thou canst not say that Melmoth's failed;  
He is yet mighty, firm, like the unribbed rock

With nature torn from him. I tell thee  
I'll yet do it. Go then away, and cease  
To stand betwixt the eyesight and the  
sight,—

I cannot see beyond. Avaunt, thou hell-  
abort!

Thou hangst like miasma upon the brain,  
Confounding it! Avaunt, thou chokest me!—  
(*Satan disappears.*)

*First Lord.* See, there, his majesty falls!

*Second Lord.* Give o'er with the wine, for  
shame!

*A Lord.* There is no meaning in this.

*Melmoth.* Hold off and fear to approach me!

*Lord.* 'Twould be improper to remain here long-  
er. Such exhibitions of the mind's terrors will re-  
sent witness. Let us pass into the other chamber.

*A Lord.* Shall we retire?

*Pellas.* I know not how to answer you, my  
lords.

*Melmoth.* Whereon do you gape? What have  
you seen, that you look so upon me? Rise not from  
your chairs! Sit! Sit! Pour out the wine and I  
will drink with you all till the eye is heavy and the  
sense is numb and the body limp with surfeit.  
Wine, wine, wine and drown the world!

*Pellas.* Oh, you are not well, my lord.

*Melmoth.* (*Calmly.*) 'Tis the music, Pellas.

Let the music cease.

It forces phantoms broad upon our visions  
That tend to childhood. There we dream,  
And there our hearts loose up their close-  
braced ingrain;

Let the feelings through that will no more be stemmed.—

Why does it not cease?

*Pellas.* The music has ceased, my lord.

*A Lord.* The rise to greatness drags with it the troop of anxieties that were before, only so much the fold.

*Another Lord.* This is no common fear that he has shown. Look yet again!

(*Satan appears.*)

*Melmoth.* What, again! Dark genius of my soul, what will you?

Speak, what will you? I fear thee not!

*Satan.* Melmoth, thou art weakening.

*Melmoth.* Thou liest deep in thy thrice-damned throat!

Nor heaven nor earth, nor the high hour of doom

(*Guests begin to leave.*)

Can break me now. Let vast ruin enter

And eat away this residence of clay,

This heart of iron will not budge to see

The ant-heap thrown. Give me the brand from hell,

Myself will fire the world and laugh to see't

Pass into a fume. (*Lords exeunt.*)

*Satan disappears. Melmoth and Pellas remain alone.*

*Pellas.* What is it? Tell me, my good lord.

What avails your speech? See you anything? Whom do you address? Your manner has sent the guests away and spoiled the night.

*Melmoth.* Pellas, what have you seen?

*Pellas.* Not what *you* seem to have seen.

*Melmoth.* Nor heard?

*Pellas.* No one, my liege, but you.

*Melmoth.* 'Pellas, my brain is sick. Go, Pellas,  
before me—

*(To himself.)* There is no reason stronger  
than her death!—

She must be put away, for living,

She makes labour to the mind!—

Go, Pellas, I'll be alone. *(Exit Pellas.)*

Resolves bend up! dark spirits to mine aid!

And every agency of starless deeds

Know my deep design and secure it fast.

There is an only and an only way,—

And that to follow!

*Curtain*

## ACT III

### SCENE I. *A room in the Palace.*

*Enter St. Francis and Toussan.*

*St. Francis.* Here we are, Toussan, like fortune's  
fools;

Her whims satisfied, she has cast us from  
her favor.

*Toussan.* Tell me! Tell me, my sweet lord—

*St. Francis.* Dolora has discouraged my ad-  
vances

And put herself wholly beyond me;

And what have I not done to possess her!—

Betrayed her brother to fetch to myself his  
titles;

Risked the swords of conspirators; estranged

From me the affections of my father;

Played false to the Prince, and doubly false

To the King. All of which, steeping us in  
danger,

May bring us nowhere! Toussan, I have  
jeopardized

My soul and nothing comes of it!

*Toussan.* Merry, my lord, are you a man, the  
stronger vessel, and boast of the powers masculine?  
And she be a woman, the weaker vessel, of con-  
struction feminine? And that first cannot rule that  
second?—Bah!

*St. Francis.* Toussan, you shall not pique me; I'm grown reckless of myself,

*Toussan.* Quality, my sweet lord, quality; and that the quality of decision, of steadiness. The strong man! (*Contemptibly.*) The high cock-combed rooster! What will you do? Not eat lizards? Not swallow fire? Not do with ghosts?

*St. Francis.* Toussan, this time, Toussan, you'll have no cause to whine over me and plague me with your interrogatives. If fairly she cannot be ruled, then foully must she be schooled.

*Toussan.* Fine! Fine! Fine!

*St. Francis.* But, win her or lose her, Toussan, I'll not neglect our common ends and interests; I'll see ever to push onward and upward.

*Toussan.* Fine! Fine! Fine!

*St. Francis.* Toussan, my word on it, Toussan, I shall school her to-night!

*Toussan.* Very fair, very fair, my sweet lord. But how, my sweet lord? By thy soul's sole sweet lady? She that's known thee so oft, not knowing thee at all? Ay, she is good at the sport, merry, my lord; fine for the having, but troublous for the keeping, eh?

*St. Francis.* Toussan, thou knowest Cedrielle . . .

*Toussan.* Merry, my lord, *thou* knowest her.

*St. Francis.* I have spoken to her of *that*, but though she has obeyed me in other matters, I cannot rule her in this.

*Toussan.* 'Cannot!' 'Cannot!' Merry, merry, my lord! 'Cannot!' And you the power masculine?

*St. Francis.* (*Positively.*) I can, Toussan, I can! Toussan, you know Francis lets not the morn-

ing wind cool off his last night's heat; nor for any obstacle does he couch his determinations. You know that!

*Toussan.* Well and verily. The rich soil whence thou springest makes thee what thou art. I knew thy mother thoroughly. She was the game-heart of the court, and merry!—Oh, merry, my lord!

*St. Francis.* They say she made my father a cuckold and so I was born. No, Toussan?

*Toussan.* Ha, ha; heh, ho! But there's your jump-jenny now. Know then thy methods, sweet my lord. Be thou mastering and thou'lt have her yielding. They have them as they want them. And, not to take the teeth from the old saw, bring a whip to a woman and—thou knowest the rest. (*Exit Toussan laughing.*)

*Enter Cedrielle.*

*Cedrielle.* Francis, my lord!

*St. Francis.* Madam, why do you haunt me? Why do you ever force yourself upon my leisure? It is not becoming to one of your station to be so unmindful of her continence. Do not gaze upon me with that sorry look as if I had killed your father. Prithee, be more constrained.

*Cedrielle.* These, your raw humors, Francis, I owe, have worn on me. I'm not your mirror where you can play off your moods at will. Believe not to bend me to your easy delights when they are forward, or break me to your vagaries as one doth with a blackamoor. I'll not endure the least.

*St. Francis.* Do not, madam, and it shall grieve me least. But,—no more of it. You are become nigh unbearable.

*Cedrielle.* Oh, thy griefs be my pleasure as my

words are thy scorn.

*St. Francis.* Thy pleasures be my scorn as my words are thy grief.

*Cedrielle.* Oh, I can as easily hate you as love you.

*St. Francis.* I can as easily skip you as trip you.

*Cedrielle.* Let thy griefs cease with thee!

*St. Francis.* And thine, never with thee, sweet chuck.

*Cedrielle.* Oh, hateful deceiver!

*St. Francis.* Oh, charming believer! Madam, what will you do?

*Cedrielle.* Ingrate, what have you done?

*St. Francis.* That which hardly affects me.

*Cedrielle.* That which fairly should kill thee.

*St. Francis.* Tush, tush, Cedrielle! I have not wronged you in so much as you have wronged yourself. Yours was the sin and mine the folly. 'Twere best then, as 'tis easiest, we both forget that hour which knew our weakness.

*Cedrielle.* Oh, in that hour I played into the hands of sin; threw away for the pleasure of a cheap moment the dearness of virtue, as 'twere a thing we could miss. I rue it! Oh, I rue it!

*St. Francis.* How goes the saying? The repentance of a ———

*Cedrielle.* Insensible man, do you now assume so distant a responsibility for a guilt we share in alike? I, to have yielded to an improper affection, and you to have imposed upon me with studied troths and practised wiles, loving without love, and sinning without beauty! Where it will serve them best, men seek to forget; the things that shame their memory, they erase from it. But women can-

not, even if they would.

*St. Francis.* Tut, tut.

*Gedrielle.* Base inhumanity that could swear by heaven looking at once to hell; that could promise now and spit upon its vows so soon after!

*St. Francis.* Forsooth, madam, I know not, but at the time, what promises I made were not without sincerity. Perhaps I should have paused—but that's a wasted thought. If nature was so absolute with us she could not be controlled, then 'tis she, not I, that's to be imputed. In truth, when the heat of the instant cooled, I repented of the folly—

*Gedrielle.* Repented! To come to me again? To assail me with new protestations, and once more beguile me into accepting thee? This is pretty repentance! Wast not so long ago as the night before last, you sought me out; burdened the air with your easy suspirations; entreated like one devout; hung upon my lips as the robber bee upon the blossom, and with that sure audacity which insincerity alone finds it in itself to practice, shared the comforts of my bed, aggravating crime to villainy? Wretch, are you unmoved?

*St. Francis.* Moved to strike you.

*Gedrielle.* Crueler than your tongue are you that say this. Oh, into what narrow channels has your manhood run? Has it forsaken you completely, leaving behind naught but the dregs of nature? What manner of man are you to do me thus? All that I have yielded of myself—is it a thing to abuse and boast of? Will you now cast me off as one discards a useless habit which he disdains to wear again? They say that love engenders love.

What bitter stuff was in mine that it brought forth hatred?

*St. Francis.* Cease, I pray you. You set the aggravation above the error. See to do what I have bidden you, and there will be no space again for such protests.

*Cedrielle.* Oh, never, faithful heart! You should be clearer than the morn, more crafty than the fox, more subtle than the snake, and your wisdom should strive to the age of the basilisk ere you will find me baby to a gig. No, Francis! Instantly I shall be firm! The largeness of your scheming I have begun to understand. Her shame shall not dispute with my weakness, nor your deed be upon my conscience.

*St. Francis.* What folly to say "no"! Rather be willing, Cedrielle, and gentle to obey, than rebellious and brought to. Know that I have consequence above you, which urge me not to engage. To-night you will leave the door of Dolora's chamber free to entrance. Thyself keep from there. If you value much in your life, value my instructions.

*(Re-enter Toussan at door, rubbing his hands gleefully. Exeunt St. Francis and Toussan.)*

*Cedrielle.* Oh vile, vile thought! Oh wretched fate! Oh dismal time! He would command me, revile me, cause me from him, and yet has my love. What anomalous things are we to suffer so and keep silent; to fear and to favor; to know and to be helpless. But I'll not let him further in his strides. The door shall be open to his coming but shut against his going. And if he dare approach Dolora as she sleeps, he'll never know to take a better step. Yet he may not find it in his courage

to come. Therefore I'll hold these fears to myself,  
lest by telling, and then he come not, 'twill bring  
on complications. Francis, be cautious of thy step!  
Know where thou goest!

*Curtain*

SCENE 2.—*Grounds adjoining palace. Night threatening.*

*Enter Dolora and Margaret.*

*Dolora.* Wrap my cloak about me, Margaret.  
How chill it is!

The winds make commotion with the air,  
Seeming at odds with the world.  
See how love-mad Boreas rages the heavens  
through

And drives yon smoky billows before him.

*Margaret.* He must be a knave, being so loose,  
And the manner he disturbs our dress  
Makes such shame to the modest stars  
That—see, they hide themselves.

*(Bells toll.)*

*Dolora.* I pray you, pause.

*Margaret.* The tower bells, madam.

*Dolora.* Count the many times they speak.

*Margaret.* Five—six—seven—.

*Dolora.* Like seven knells. How they ring  
into the soul!

I know not what is come upon me now  
To make me fearful. These are presentiments

That take the spirit into a secret world  
Yet tell it naught. Come, Cedrielle awaits  
us. *(They go out.)*

SCENE 3—*The same.*

*Enter from castle, Royce, Dohlgryn, Brabant and Berkeley, with torches.*

*Brabant.* A dreary night this, gentlemen!

*Dohlgryn.* A favorable one to our designs.

*Brabant.* Who should think so fair a thought needs be executed in so foul a night to make it a noble deed!

*Royce.* Those who can disjoin darkness from its terrors.

*Berkeley.* Those who know that there are secrets in the world, and that such nights have their motives.

*Dohlgryn.* Gentlemen, is Francis gone from the Palace?

*Royce.* No. At least, I think not.

*Berkeley.* Then he may hap on us here?

*Dohlgryn.* Let him. His safety lies in his avoiding us, and in his silence, which he will best observe. We need not care for him. Rather, we should look to resist him—crush him.

*Royce.* Rather, Dohlgryn, we follow the example of our great Preceptor, and resist not evil.

*Dohlgryn.* That would be nobler indeed. And I grant you, Royce, that evil is like a hurricane which blows itself out of its own breath even after mountains have failed to stop it; yet, in halting it, there is a measure of delight, akin to satisfaction, that good accomplished succeeds not in. So is it with us and St. Francis.

*Berkeley.* What winds are up!

*Brabant.* And this cloud descending! It comes on murky,

*Royce.* Like a curtain to our eagerness, saving the surprise of the dawn.

*Brabant.* Gentlemen, attend! If I can know their forms by their shadows, these are our friends.

*Royce.* Berkeley, look to the Tower while we receive them.

*Voices.* (*Without.*) Holla! Holla!

*Royce.* Who's there?

*Voices.* King's men and friends to our friends.

*Enter Steele, De Forest and Edwin.*

*Royce.* Then to us.

*De Forest.* Royce? Dohlgrin? We are timely met.

*Edwin.* Not the best time to be abroad in, gentlemen.

*Steele.* By the wine and the wind, I vow, better abroad with a purpose than at home with the cat.

*Dohlgrin.* We thank you, gentlemen, you do not fail our need of you.

*Steele.* Oh, those that think of the days forget not the hours.

*Dohlgrin.* For our part, those that forget not the hours, make rich the days.

*De Forest.* 'Each man to his own'—goes it not so?

*Royce.* Ay, so and so; but you are indeed most welcome.

*Edwin.* Has the signal shown?

*Royce.* No, we may expect it presently.

*Edwin.* This night encourages doing the daring deed.

*Steele.* Our spirits are in it, if our heads must hang for it.

*Royce.* Our purpose does not question death;

and is so exalted it draws not only on the sap of friendship but on the wine of love.

*De Forest.*—Gentlemen, our position here is uncertain.

*Brabant.* What now? What may the matter be?

*De Forest.* Crossing the bridge on our way here—

*Dohlgrin.* You were challenged?

*De Forest.* Not that—we suddenly came upon his majesty—

*Brabant.* To-night!

*De Forest.* A while ago.

*Dohlgrin.* Unattended, you say?

*De Forest.* Quite alone. We passed that near to him and to our several salutes he gave no answer.

*Royce.* Which way was he going, towards us?

*De Forest.* Nay, opposed to us.

*Steele.* You mean he faced us, but himself was quite motionless.

*De Forest.* However, when we turned again to see him, he was slowly following in our direction.

*Royce.* Intent upon you?

*De Forest.* Hardly—

*Edwin.* Nay, he did not even notice us. His head was bent to his chest, his arms locked behind him; he seemed like a student of the world to whom its problem was too bewildering.

*Berkeley.* Lights, yonder! (*Lights appear in the distance and vanish.*)

*All.* Oh, where?

*Berkeley.* Now they are gone; vanished on the instant!

*Royce.* How did they show?

*Berkeley.* First, two of no duration; then a single one brighter than either, which held until I turned to you.

*Royce.* From what direction showed they, from the bay?

*Berkeley.* No; more surely from the embankment.

*Royce.* From the tower, then. Hold steady observation. The signal will be repeated presently. 'Tis decided, then. (*To Steele, Edwin and De Forest.*) You are to wait in readiness at the appointed place. We count on you, friends.

*De Forest.* My lords, the gravity of the matter we have on hand forbids any waywardness of action. We can well conceive there's much hangs upon this night's work.

*Dohlgrin.* The fortune of an empire!

*De Forest.* Why, then, we are better matched for it.

*Royce.* Why has the signal not again appeared? Sure it was not from the bay you saw the light?

*Berkeley.* Certain it is.

*Royce.* But in this direction, no?

*Berkeley.* Ay, even where the tower should be.  
(*Lights show again.*)

*All.* See, see, there it shows again!

*Royce.* This second is confirmation of the first.

*Steele.* Haste we, then; for a while, my lords, good night.

*Berkeley, Royce and Dohlgrin.* Good night.  
(*Exeunt De Forest, Edwin and Steele.*)

*Berkeley.* I'm glad we thought of them, Royce.

*Royce.* Ay, they are proper men when proper

circumstances rise to challenge their worth. This is to them not so much a duty as a privilege.—Who's there!

*(Enter St. Francis and Toussan, with torch.)*

*Brabant.* Here comes a viper. To think of his rascality is to desire to end it.

*Berkeley.* Be discreet, Brabant; let fall your sword.

*St. Francis.* Who's *here*? Aha! *(Agitated on perceiving them.)* What? So late in such a night? Conspiracy that counts such men amongst it glances at crowned greatness only. What's ado? Where's the King?

*Dohlgrin.* The King is where he is. We are neither his guardians nor his keepers.

*Royce.* You do not ask for the Prince, my lord.

*St. Francis.* The Prince?—The Prince?—heh—

*Toussan.* Merry, my lords, he's been dinning "prince" into this ear till I am deaf on both.

*St. Francis.* Toussan speaks truly. If John were ever distant from my mind, I should regret it. What's with him? What bring you from him?

*Dohlgrin.* *(Dubiously.)* Be he above the earth—

*St. Francis.* Go to, how you speak!

*Dohlgrin.* *(To the others.)* Shall we let him hear? 'Tis a long tale, St. Francis. To begin with—

*Toussan.* The king has claim upon your time, my lord.

*St. Francis.* True, you remind me, Toussan. We must find him instantly.

*All.* Instantly!

*St. Francis.* Ay, our purpose is immediate.

*Dohlgrin.* Your purpose with the King is immediate?

*St. Francis.* (*Confused.*) That is, there—  
(*Turns to Toussan appealingly.*)

*Toussan.* Ay, immediate, as his majesty awaits us in his chamber.

*St. Francis.* That's so, friends.

*Dohlgrin.* How 'in his chamber' when at present he is abroad?

*St. Francis.* Abroad?

*Toussan.* (*Hastily.*) It does not matter, eh, merry, my lord? We'll await him, then.

*St. Francis.* Yes, we'll await him. Friends, when shall we meet again? To-morrow?

*Royce.* A proper time enough.

*Brabant.* (*Aside.*) Oh, and that should be the last.

*St. Francis.* We leave you then; good night.

(*Exeunt St. Francis and Toussan.*)

*Brabant.* He plays both hands as false, lying, traitorous to the king as to our cause. I'm sorry, we should have killed him here.

*Royce.* There's no regretting it, Brabant.

Death itself is hardly punishment;

But death that trips up

Great ambition, high hopes, schemes projected,

At a time when life is measured by the greater compass,

Then 'tis something—

Then 'tis part of heaven's intercession

Here on earth.

*Enter Melmoth.*

*Dohlgrin.* Who is this that enters—not the

king?

*Berkeley.* Your eyesight's keen. That surely is the king.

*Dohlgrin.* Let us nearer to this end, my lords.  
We may escape attention and so, depart.

*Royce.* Nay, he has seen us already. Raise the torch aloft;

But let our countenances be familiar  
With their native hue, lest, being pale,  
They betray our thoughts. (*Torches are raised.*)

How does your majesty?

*Melmoth.* When had we such a night? History attests

That the elements go ever with great events  
In the lives of men. When had we such a night?

*Royce.* When Richard slew his old and infirm father

To ascend the sooner to the throne.

*Melmoth.*—Then laid the self-same hand upon himself, not so?

*Royce.* Ay; destroyed in his own destruction.

*Melmoth.* So is it with all of us. The Nemesis  
Of self-ideal. Give me good night, my lords.

The end's indeed the poetry of life;

For in the consummation, that rare dream,  
Through which the soul in vital harmony  
With all the world is led,— is curtained o'er.  
Give me good-night, my lords.

There'll be no hunting to-night in the heavens;

Orion sleeps, and the hounds follow no trail.

Give me good night—but the Lion, the Lion  
shall rule!

*Royce.* Will not his majesty enter to the palace?  
This night hath a thousand humors—  
Not one to be trusted.

*Melmoth.* No; give me good night.

*(All go out but Melmoth.)*

Beauty and loveliness shall pass away  
This night ere dreams are ended. And a star,  
Like the early light which fails the dead-  
new born,  
When given to the bosom of the world,  
Will go out of heaven.

Then will come sorrow, anguish, and  
remorse,—

And that puts out the light! I go to thee  
now—

Thee whom my soul would embrace, and my  
hand

Must destroy! I go to thee like one un-  
taught

In his own instructions—and bewildered!  
But life must out, stars fall, and ruin come.  
There is no pausing now so near the end—  
There's nothing else.

Awake, Dolora!

For thine shall be the everlasting sleep  
Hereafter!

*Curtain*

SCENE 4. *Dolora's bedchamber. Up stage, cen-  
ter, is a bed with drawn curtains. Door to left  
leads to ante-chamber. Two casement windows, to*

*back of stage. A bureau; a couch; a long upright mirror; chairs, etc.*

*Enter Dolora and Cedrielle.*

*Dolora.* Cedrielle, we'll at once to bed and anticipate this night of its terrors.

*Cedrelle.* So soon, madam? 'Tis earlier than your wont.

*Dolora.* I have such unwholesome fancies usurping my quieter thoughts, they caution me against this wakefulness. (*Sits herself on couch.*) Restless grown, fretful and peevish, why should I burden you with my reproaches and make you concerned with me? Unfasten this clasp. It seems that heaven then asserts itself over us when we are ready to think ourselves above it. Look out and see if it doth rain.

*Cedrielle.* I will. (*Goes to window.*)

*Dolora.* How oft does the condition of the weather accord with that of the heart! Surely there is sympathy in nature.—How is it out?

*Cedrielle.* (*At window.*) There's a moist wind blowing and the night is rolled up in such a heavy mist, it cannot be seen through. A night one feels rather than sees. (*Dolora approaches window.*)

*Dolora.* It is indeed as you say. At times, Cedrielle, life is even as this night, dark, dark and failing of an end.—Come, help me off with these pale trinkets. Without a memory to link them to our hearts they lose their original charm. (*Thunder.*) Oh! I fear this night beyond all reason.

*Cedrielle.* Why do you, madam? Why do you start so at the least disturbance of nature, which when 'tis over, is but an airy nothing. These agita-

tions are your own.

*Dolora.* Nay, Cedrielle, you are pale yourself; and besides I do observe in your glance, to-night, something quite unbrave, which comes not of the weather, meseems. What is it, if it is anything?

*Cedrielle.* Indeed it is not anything. If I am pale, then take it I have borrowed something of your own unrest. Humors are persuasive; they league disposition with disposition, be they anywhit opposed. Our hearts are of such rare textures, like sensitive chords, they stir to the unruly wind as to the balm. And the mind, like the weather-cock, goes the way of the wind.

*Dolora.* Nothing more?

*Cedrielle.* No, in good faith!

*Dolora.* Sure?

*Cedrielle.* Sure.

*Dolora.*—Help me drag off this heavy robe which clings like a cerecloth about my body. (*Pause.*) My father, Cedrielle, I fear, will not survive the week.

*Cedrielle.* He is old, madam; well above eighty years.

*Dolora.* But loves not life the less, God wot. Make fast the casement-windows, Cedrielle, while I go undress. 'Tis raining now, I think. (*Dolora goes into ante-chamber.*)

*Cedrielle.* The heart must have a double lease of life—

Else it must fail us midway. Oh, this suspense

Doth make me conscience-ridden, and throws me

Into a fever-heat of doubt.

*Dolora.* (*From within.*) Cedrielle—?

*Cedrielle.* Yes, madam—?

*Dolora.* What do you think, do ever our dreams tell us anything?

*Cedrielle.* Very often they do.

*Dolora.* Oh, I am so glad you say so!

*Cedrielle.* She is in better vein. (*Aloud.*)

Dolora, you'll not retire so soon? (*No answer.*) What, Dolora?—

Mine own eyes stick, and my limbs need effort

To sustain them. But the night's too full

And eloquent of fateful prophecies

To let guilty sleep, that steals his watch,

Summon the weary sense, and overpow'r it.

Nor must I let *her* sleep!

*Dolora.*—But are they real, Cedrielle?

*Cedrielle.* I do not hear you, madam.

*Dolora.* Do ever our dreams seek to betray us?

*Cedrielle.* Not selfishly, madam.—Are you undressed?

*Dolora.* How, then?

*Cedrielle.* "How, then" what?

*Dolora.* Our dreams, goosy.

*Cedrielle.* Oh, our dreams!

*Dolora.* Yes. Do they ever seek to betray us?

*Cedrielle.* I don't know—I think . . . but what matters it, anyhow?

*Dolora.* (*Appearing at the door.*) Do you know, Cedrielle, Melmoth came to me yesternight?

*Cedrielle.* Here, madam? I did not see him—

*Dolora.* Like one forth from a sleep of troubled dreams,

A spirit leading.

Without the outward show of royalty

He came,  
 And yet more kingly never did he seem.  
 His left hand held a sword without an edge;  
 And in his right there was a flowing cup  
 Which he would feign compel unto his lips  
 And was not able.

*Cedrielle.* Strange you dream of him thus!

*(Dolora withdraws again into ante-chamber.)*

Oh, poor heart, she knows not how, alas,  
 These silent hours may play about her soul,  
 Enacting things that broad and wholesome  
 day

Would shame to look on. What is in-  
 nocence

When its dear virtue hangs upon the wind  
 And caprice of chance? So little valued;  
 So great, its possession lost!

*(Re-enter Dolora in loose gown, ready to retire.)*

Oh, Dolora, I told you once that you had beauty  
 of sufficient allowance to win you a prince, but you  
 have it in that rich measure, I would for your own  
 sake, you had less of it, that you could be more  
 happy.

*Dolora.* Do you think, then, my beauty would  
 even now hold the survey of a dispassionate suitor?  
 Nay, rather, I'll not ask it. Take up your instru-  
 ment, *Cedrielle*, and play while I try to lose the  
 sense of reality. *(Reclines on bed.)*

*Cedrielle.* Dolora—

*Dolora.* What, *Cedrielle*?

*Cedrielle.* *(Anxiously.)* Do not sleep, Dolora.

*Dolora.* Why, you goose?

*Cedrielle.* I don't know, but—*(Imploringly.)*  
 do not sleep, I pray!

*Dolora.* (*Raising herself.*) How now, what's the matter with you, *Cedrielle*?

*Cedrielle.* Oh! I'd rather we were together.

*Dolora.* Why, so we are.

*Cedrielle.* I mean that I should remain up with you; that we should waste the night in words; tell each other tales; read, and sing, and call up pleasant memories, and so, wear weariness away.

*Dolora.* Go to, you are whimsical. I am tired.

*Cedrielle.* (*Nervously.*) The king, *Dolora*!

*Dolora.* (*Playfully.*) Is graciously bestowed to slumber. Thus he lies, (*Makes a certain posture.*) his person divested of its terrible greatness. Perchance thus he lies—or thus—his arm a second pillow; or better, so.

*Cedrielle.* No, madam—

*Dolora.* No? Then lies awake; or walks about; or is seated; or—

*Cedrielle.* Do you think, madam?—

*Dolora.* That he loves me? Wily, he loves me; nily, he loves me not. But go, get thee thyself to bed. Time doth wane into the slender hours and you should be weary. Go get thee gone; or, if you stay, as doth content you, play me a score or two, not light, but tender; sweet, not sad; something that puts to sleep the thousand passions of the heart and gives it rest. (*Cedrielle plays.*)

*Dolora.* So. That's sweet. Play on. (*After a while.*) We are all sorrowful children, *Cedrielle*—

*Cedrielle.* Yes, madam—

*Dolora.* And I often wonder whether of the many, many souls that endure upon this earth, 'twould matter much if one had never been.

*Cedrielle.* Very much so, for God has given each

a purpose in his being.

*Dolora.* Do you think, then, we should live for others more than for ourselves?

*Cedrielle.* Ay, *Dolora*, for others survive us, and living, we exist as much in others as in ourselves. 'Tis we that quit the world, and therefore 'tis we should make it our beneficiary.

*Dolora.* I thank you for teaching me this. Now, good night.

*Cedrielle.* (*Anxiously.*) Good night—good night.

*Dolora.* Make low the light, dear *Cedrielle*.

*Cedrielle.* I will, I will. (*Turns down lamp.*)

*Dolora.* That's well. (*Sleeps.*)

*Cedrielle.* (*Over her.*) May the bosom of quiet be thy pillow of rest.

And thy dreams, the calmer visions of the night,

Attend on thy soul, sweetly, like cherubims  
In music ascending. (*Softly.*) *Dolora*, do  
you sleep?—

Now she sleeps, and now the best alarm  
Should not awaken her to the wretch  
That makes history of night. I'll obey;  
But obedience will go so far—no more:  
I'll see him on the verge of another's doom  
And push him to his own. (*Unlocks door.*)

I'll let him in;

Himself must needs determine if he go.

*Dolora*, sleep!

And cover with a film this naughty world,  
And see it not. If I had magic charm  
To spirit thee away into a world  
Of better fabric, I'd follow thee myself.

(*Noise.*)

He comes already; hence he mayn't so soon!  
*(She hides behind the arras.)*

*Enter St. Francis.*

*St. Francis. (Calling softly.)* Cedrielle! Cedrielle!

*(Feels along the arras.)* I thought she would be here. Now, what were his words? Ay, 'the coxcombed rooster!' 'the power masculine!' Those were his words! *(Beholding Dolora.)*

Oh, most beauteous!

Nature's perfect fingers cannot again  
 Design in manner like to this! Rare prize,  
 To gain which dwarfs the halting thought of  
 honor,

Spiting the dread of consequence. *(Listens.)*

Ah, I'd crowd all hazard of the yet to be  
 Into that small while which sees me at her  
 side.

Thus do we, for a present advantage  
 Forego all the future.—Cedrielle! She is not  
 here. *(Approaches Dolora.)*

*Enter Melmoth.*

*(Francis turns abruptly. They gaze at each other fixedly.)*

*Melmoth.* There's nothing now can make me  
 to exclaim

Out at the strangeness of it all.

Life's too possible!

To wonder at things this world shall mani-  
 fest

From time to time, is little knowing it.

See! Francis, see! I sink my knee before  
 thee

Like the serf, the minion, or the fallen slave,

If from that lily hand whose grace is its  
 fault,  
 Thou hast known the bounty of her heart.  
 (Pause.)

But bend thou,  
 And bare thy breast to its deserve,  
 If, in the pure unconsciousness of sleep,  
 Now the regeant of her virtue,  
 She has felt the rabid touch of lust  
 That meant to defile her! (Pause.)  
 You do not kneel; go then.  
 You have sinned already by your presence.  
 Yet if your silence lies to me,  
 And you yourself shall recommend the truth  
 Henceforth to your honor,  
 Take this dagger (*Francis takes dagger.*)  
 and redeem yourself. (*Exit St. Francis.*)  
 (*Melmoth approaches Dolora.*)

Thou art only for love and for death,  
 Sweet sorrow of my soul! And in the first,  
 Like the Supreme Man who died while he  
 bestowed,  
 Thou hast richly given for the second.  
 Therefore, for thy love thou diest,  
 As many come to die.  
 Since careless fate hath placed thee in my  
 way,

*It is to blame, not I, nor thou, great heart!*  
 And were thy perfect soul  
 More perfect in its applauded innocence,  
 I know not that above the fatal promise  
 I could set my heart.  
 Then let not heaven  
 (*Exit Cedrielle unobserved.*)

From its high and pillarless arcade  
Seek to dissuade me. For I would sooner  
life,  
Than love in life, and one shuts out the other.  
Awake, Dolora!  
Here there's life no more, but where, I know  
not.

Awake!

Or shall I still the labored breath of sleep  
Even as thou liest!— (*Dolora awakes.*)

*Dolora.* Melmoth?

*Melmoth.* Ay.

*Dolora.* What time of night is this?

*Melmoth.* At cross hours with the morning.  
But think of time no more. With thee the record  
of its day is at an end.

*Dolora.* How mean you, Melmoth? What will  
you do?

*Melmoth.* A necessary deed, Dolora.

*Dolora.* So never have I seen you before. You  
look so earnest and so calm, I almost fear you.  
They say when strong men's souls become intent on  
deeds, their faces look like this. (*Anxiously.*) But  
in your love I feel secure.

*Melmoth.* Err not, sweet lady. Great love  
wounds itself—

*Dolora.* (*Anxiously.*) Then loves the most!

*Melmoth.* But is most cruel! Destroys on what  
it feeds!

*Dolora.* (*Alarmed.*) Yet does not die?

*Melmoth.* Nay, but kills! but kills! Think  
upon the world this last, Dolora, and say farewell.

*Dolora.* Alas! And must this be?

*Melmoth.* It must.

*Dolora.* And is it for thy sake that I must die?

*Melmoth.* 'Tis for my sake.

*Dolora.* Oh, then tell me why, that I may know my death's not thrown away.

*Melmoth.* Ask it not, yet be the sacrifice. They ask not, they that die for any cause.

*Dolora.* Oh, then death is life, and life is death, and I am one to both.

*Melmoth.* Ay. Ay.

*Dolora.* Spare me not, if in my living, thru some unlearned and terrible way, you must suffer to the causing death.

*Melmoth.* Ay. Ay.

*Dolora.* Then am I prepared.

*Melmoth.* (*Aside.*) Oh, where's that fixedness, that iron nerve, that grit that ruled me once? Confess it not to yourself, Melmoth, you are weakening!

*Dolora.* (*Baring her throat.*) Here, Melmoth.

*Melmoth.* (*Aside.*) Oh, shame!

*Dolora.* Here is my white neck, Melmoth, which knew no dearer touch than thy sweet lips, its proudest jewel. Now brace it with thy purposed fingers—so—till they hold off breath and leave my body without impulse.

*Melmoth.* Ha! He said thou canst not do it, and thou canst not! My hands are traitorous! Oh, my will's become the trifier of my weakness, and all is contradiction. (*Falls back.*) I cannot do it!  
(*Bells sound.*)

*Dolora.* Oh, Melmoth, why is this?

Tell me how to best deserve your love;

If not by death, then how? how?

*Melmoth.* (*With abandon.*) Thyself! Thyself! Let thine own hand be thine own possessor!

Promise me that, Dolora. Quick! Promise me.  
*(Hides his face.)* Oh this is the least of me!  
 Now have I fallen to the lowest.

*(Knocking without.)*

*Dolora.* That I promise thee, Melmoth! I will  
 restore thee to thy peace.

*Melmoth.* *(Embracing her.)* Oh, that I loved  
 thee less!

*(Knocking without.)*

*(They separate as Cedrielle and Courtiers enter.)*

*Courtier.* Most gracious liege, if we do here  
 intrude

Let our special purpose be the excuse.

Esmund's escaped. The guards,

A while since, up from their sleep,

Induced upon them by most vicious drugs

Which sealed their consciousness for some  
 odd hours,

Stirred the bells to this midnight alarm,

And warned us from our beds. We thither  
 came

Directed by this lady. *(Signifying Cedrielle.)*

The guards stand without, awaiting enforce-  
 ment

To pursue. Please to give the word.

*Melmoth.* Go out; go out. I follow you.

*(Exeunt all but Dolora and Cedrielle.)*

*Cedrielle.* Praise God, dear madam, you still  
 survive this night!

*Dolora.* Go you, too, and leave me here alone!

*Cedrielle.* Why, I'll stay with you. There are  
 many—

*Dolora.* Go! I tell thee, thou wilt make me  
 mad repeating this.

*Cedrielle.* (*Going.*) I fear this night is not yet ended.

*Dolora.* Go! go! go! go!

I'm sure that she will make me mad!

Wheels! Wheels! Where, got I all these wheels!

The whole world with its streets, peoples and trades,

Rivers, bridges, wagons and commotions,

Has crept into my head and there spins round!

Wheels! Wheels! A million whirling wheels,

Leaping, revolving,—faster, faster, faster . .

*Curtain*

## ACT IV

SCENE I. *Public Park. Easter Sunday. It is a warm summer afternoon.*

*Enter Melmoth and Pellas, dressed as citizens.*

*Melmoth.* Let me linger here. There's something pleasing

In this prospect makes me wish to tarry.

'Tis not the air, drawing upon the odor

Of these bearded trees and common flowers,

Caters to us here where it does not elsewhere.

Our chamber windows serve the sight to views more grand:

Green lawns peopled with figures cut in bronze

And alabaster;

Floral gardens; waters serpentine;

Long spacious avenues, which rows and rows

Of stately pines, on either hand, escort

To the stretch and brink of our vision.

Then 'tis not these, Pellas. What is it?

*Pellas.* 'Tis the air of homely satisfaction

Pervading the scene like the light of a Sabbath morn

Upon the world, doth make you pensive, my lord.

*Melmoth.* There is a change, Pellas.

I know not why I'm grown so reminiscent.

Things of former days creep in upon me

With a new significance. What is it,

Pellas?

There were children before, men and women;  
 Now as they pass me by, I find myself  
 Seeing them, observing them, thinking of  
 them,

As tho they had been missing to mine eyes.

*Pellas.* Alas, I clear forgot to-day was Easter  
 morn!

So do we depart the thought of God,  
 The rites and preference of our days,  
 Yielding our attention to the temporal,  
 That we o'er glance our spirits' proper weal,  
 And find us wanting.

How is it, my lord, with your religion?

*Melmoth.* Eh, what?

*Pellas.* My lord, I am overbold? I ask it but in  
 sympathy.

*Melmoth.* Religion? Faith, you hurt me.  
 You're unjust.

*Pellas.* I'm sorry, truly, I'm sorry.

*Melmoth.* Matters it, Pellas, how one serves the  
 Lord

If he but serve Him? The science lies not  
 So much in our worship as in our faith.  
 Be religious if thou wilt, but ask no man.  
 Ay, do not speak of that! Do not speak of  
 that!—

What do the children sing?

*Pellas.* Hymns, my lord.

*Melmoth.* Hymns. (*Reflecting.*) I remember,  
 Pellas,—but let that be.

Who are those men yonder?

*Pellas.* Honest men, my liege.

*Melmoth.* How simply "honest men!"

*Pellas.* Ay, my liege.

Men who travail in the fear of the lord,  
And in the virtue of their living  
Seek not to go beyond themselves.  
Humble in their plenty; in their want,  
serene.

They give of themselves what is most dear  
to them,

And murmur not. They hear of the ills  
Of the world and believe in its good.

Two solemn moments mark their even lives:  
Love and death.

The one they cherish as a duty bound;

The other they accept with resignation.

Thus, my lord, do they live, love and suffer

In their own and unrelated spheres,

And pass out from the toss and toil of life

Unnoticed, undiscovered, like supers,

From the back door of the theatre,

Whilst the great rôles are on. They are  
simple men.

*Melmoth.* (*Sadly.*) Happy men!

And they question not, and wonder not,

And never reason "why?" Are there none

Among them, who, looking to the mystery

Of the stars, crave not to fly to them?

*Pellas.* Fly to them?

*Melmoth.* (*Vehemently.*) None who have a  
sorrow for the whole world,

Seeing it bowed down by the rigor

Of nature's laws, and seek not to revolt

Against them?

*Pellas.* What, my lord!

*Melmoth.* Not one,

Who, in the wrecking fever of his ambition,

Shakes a mailed fist at the Invisible Hosts,  
And thunders war to God!

*Pellas.* War to God!

*Melmoth.* Happy men!

*Pellas.* Your words are very strange to me, my lord.

They slip the grasp of my understanding  
And leave me wondering.

*Melmoth.* No, old man, nor will you understand

Should Hell itself unfold to you their meaning,

Or Heaven warn you against it. 'Tis such a thing,

Must separate reason from words; meaning,  
From comprehension.

Here comes a minion of thy son. Look to him.

That haste is herald only of the worst  
In happenings. (*Enter Toussan.*)

'Tis of her death he comes to tell me now.

Not with a dagger did I slay her,

Nor pour into her cup the hemlock's juice

That seduces the breath from life.

(*To Toussan.*) You need not speak. I know too well your news; she is dead.

*Toussan.* Merry, my lord, who?

*Melmoth.* Then lives?

*Toussan.* Merry, my lord, *who?*

*Melmoth.* Wretch, thou holdst me in suspense!

*Toussan.* And thou holdst me! Merry, my lord, means his majesty the daughter of the one that has just quitted life?

*Pellas.* What, old Kemiss, dead!

*Melmoth.* But Dolora lives? Death itself is nothing. 'Tis imaging makes death feared! But Dolora lives!

*Toussan.* Ay, lives, but in such a state that one thru pity would have jt otherwise. The old duke's dead; and she, thru great dolor of his passing, has forgotten count.

*Melmoth.* Her mind was not so faithful as her heart.

One failed the other!

*Pellas.* Dolora mad! Old Kemiss dead! Alas! What's this world come to?

*Melmoth.* (*Moved.*) He is the better off. Rather life's death, than death in life. When a soul fails we call it by that name. 'Tis the expiration of our this-world's lease. But the failing of a mind, that is The taking quite away of life, and yet Denying death. (*Contemplates.*)

*Pellas.* What exactly made his death so sudden, can you say?

*Toussan.* Merry, my lord, men die when they cease to grow older. Poor health, for one; a broken spirit, which has had its hurts before, for another; and a presuming old age—all three combined to bring him to his end. If you'll hear me further, sir, Walden, in attempting to fly the country, doubtless to join with the bothersome John, was intercepted, and now's within the Tower, himself a prisoner, where, a jump before, he ruled. Merry, eh? Esmond's whereabouts have not been learned, but certain it is he is within the walls, free for anything. Had Francis, your much obedient son, been heard, and his words preferred when he sought to caution

against what's responsible for this, it would not have come to this.

*Melmoth.* It does not matter now. (*To Toussan.*) Go you before me. (*Exit Toussan.*)

It was not by her death alone that then  
I could reach out to the impossible goal.  
The world's engulfed me with its sympathies  
Too far already.

'Twill force an end—it must!  
'Tis become a greater and a grander struggle.  
And the first full might—  
The rare, unbroken energy of the spirit  
To riot against the riot of the flood—  
Is no more with me.

*Curtain*

SCENE 2. *Room in the Palace.*

*Enter St. Francis and Toussan.*

*St. Francis.* Counsel, Toussan? A fig, a fig, I say! Go link thee with a fool; confound thee with your counsel. Whereto has your counsel led us? To loss, to blundering, to mishap, to chance escapes, to danger of our necks, our ends, our all! A fig, a fig, I say! We're found out to an ace; royally discovered on both hands, and either hand is free to cut us down. Counsel? A fig!

*Toussan.* A stopper to your spleen, my lord, my sweet lord. (*Expostulating.*) Blundering! Danger! Loss! Rats and lizards, merry, merry, my lord! You tear, you fume, you exclaim! Wherefore? And if wherefore, whereto? And if whereto, whereat? Wisdom, I say; wisdom and a steady nerve; nerve and quality, merry, my lord, and we'll

undo those that have undone us. A dull trap can catch an angry bear; then let not thine own fury be its own bait. Clever, my lord,—that's the trick! Be thou clever rather than proficient, and thou'lt wear the plume and crow—

*St. Francis.* If our heads be not leveled and our tongues pulled out ere that time. We're hedged in, sir. Royce and Dohlgrin, like opposite fires, are raging thru the palace in search of Esmund, at once with an eye for us. If we come upon them, or they on us—

*Toussan.* Game on it, my sweet lord, we'll not let honor scare our conscience. We'll dig thru their poor, pestilent wrappers of a hide as deep as sunlight. We'll make them pray harder than ghosts at Christmas. We'll swear them off their sweaty legs with black, inflammable curses till they forget their own wheezes. Our lives are worth a point, eh? We'll halt them, my lord, we'll do that to them. But let them bark their shins in our pursuit, not we in theirs. Follow me, my sweet lord, we'll lay our heads together and call it individual.

*St. Francis.* Nay, follow me—this way.

*Toussan.* Follow! Follow! Follow!

*(Exeunt both.)*

*Enter Royce and Dohlgrin hastily from either side, meeting. Both are disguised.*

*Royce.* Well, what have you seen?

*Dohlgrin.* Esmund, I have not. But I have seen enough

To make these eyes, clear of that weakness  
Which wastes their quality, to dissolve  
And run out in tears. The jewel light of this

court's

Eclipsed, cancelled, put out.

I met Dolora wandering thru these halls

Without aim of direction, spirit or desire.

A distant eye, a simple and loveless smile,

Told me better than all her random words

The story we hoped untrue.

*Royce.* Then she is mad!

*Dohlgrin.* And do you wonder? This state  
drives to madness!

Calamity pursues us like the still-hunt  
hounds—

Like the northern wolves that race across the  
heavens,

Swallowing the sun.

*Royce.* Dohlgrin, you are not yourself to-day.

*Dohlgrin.* I am not.

*Royce.* I pray you, take yourself in hand.

*Dohlgrin.* (*Bitterly.*) Nay, nay, there's cause  
enough to make one quarrel

With his own nature. See Royce,

The great mass of our doings' jumbled up,—

Thrust aside by the back of a hand

Without the eye following.

Esmund has led us to a peak, pinned us there,

Then removed the base of our support,

And so left us.

Here's labor mocked at, effort unacknowl-  
edged,

And the whole school of an empire swung out

Into the unsupportable air. What's to do?

*Royce.* I know not what myself.

Esmund's being here within the palace,

And so immediate to the person of the king,

Makes all things, conjunctive to security,  
At once precarious.

*Dohlgrin.* Oh, Royce, if I had hate in my heart  
for him

Now's the time 'twould show, and aggrava-  
vate

Itself into a fever.

*Royce.* Moderate your thought and feeling to-  
ward him.

He should have more our support and less  
Our prejudice. For in such a case,  
Friendship's nothing if it is not all.

Here he enters.

That helpless look which starts out from his  
eye

Even humbles pity for his state.

*Enter Esmund.*

*Dohlgrin.* Ay. He thinks not of us.

We and our purposes are as far from him  
As that inauspicious thought, which spoils  
The rose and promise of our effort,  
Is near to him,

*Esmund.* You hardly greet me well, my lords.

*Dohlgrin.* I'm sorry we do it not well. 'Tis a  
fault,

If the heart teach not the lips eloquence  
They cannot speak.

*Esmund.* What is it with you? What's the  
matter?

*Dohlgrin.* Nothing that is not.

*Esmund.* I pray you, friends, do not censure me  
Thus freely, nor give way to your grievances  
Which excite mine own. Howbeit the out-  
come

Of this quick and dangerous adventure—  
My coming here—may derogate the vant-  
age

Of our prince, the which I fairly doubt,  
I still must further in the course  
I have for myself prescribed.

My present purpose which stirs not indeed  
With vital element of general good

Yet finds a mother-wing in the state's.

'Tis that my heart is too much charged  
with grief

To suffer me the ease of proper answer  
Or excuse for my behavior, which makes  
you

Such lame comforters.

*Dohlgrin.* Who doubts not in his own perform-  
ances,

He need not answer any.

Esmund, you have lost yourself in your own  
desires,

And forgotten us!

*Esmund.* Ah, no! To forget would take away  
the pain.

'Tis the more remembered, and therefore  
Grief the more extenuated.

If mine be waywardness in your conceit,  
I cannot help. Here's the principle:

Poor reason is strong affection's fool,

And strong affection ever to her will

Doth twist the frail ligaments of things

And qualities, careless of circumstances.

*Dohlgrin.* There's the harm!

By such a disposition, do you not alone

*Not* assist the cause but help to drag it down.

Can you then find it in you to excuse  
A wrong so loudly imminent to—to the  
whole!

It is plain you jumped consideration  
When you threw yourself away on private  
wrongs,

Neglecting ours.

Do you intend that to elicit sympathy?

*Esmund.* (*Hurt.*) Dohlgrin, speak not to me!

'Tis well to censure when there's no regret.

What, so circumstanced as I am now,

Would you have done? Done other? I  
doubt it much;

I would not wish upon you a moiety of my  
cares

Even should it teach you fellow-feeling.

(*Turning to Royce.*)

Royce, you are silent. May it be

Resentment in your heart is too full for  
words,

Or is it that you understand death's grief

And respect its distractions? I take that,  
rather,

And see in your silence an allowance

For the spirit of revenge, which, if denied,

Must pluck at the heart's root ever.

*Royce.* Dohlgrin, forego.

We ought allow for that degree of selfish-  
ness

Which is in every man. So, likewise,

The strength of habit and affection

Must be known and understood ere we

Can undertake to find exception,

And presume the anger of our hearts

Upon another.  
 Besides, revenge, when not the unsuspected  
 art  
 That does in secrecy, deserves a with-thought  
 here.  
 But where it is the quick and brave confes-  
 sion  
 Of a hurt, deeper than reason's reach,  
 And beyond its medicine, then even  
 It claims a nearness to justification.

*Dohlgrin.* I'm not so much against him, that  
 you know,  
 As he is from us. But this you must confess:  
 By his revenge our cause suffers neglect.  
 If Esmund would bear with us as we with  
 him,  
 He would release vengeance from his own  
 hand  
 And entrust it to that Greater One,  
 Which knows to mete out knowingly and  
 when.

*Esmund.* Not so! Not so! Myself and I my-  
 self!  
 All else—too slow! Nor will I let Time,  
 That joins again the little broken weft-  
 threads  
 Of our lives; that heals the wound, and  
 makes  
 Of great grief, a careless memory,  
 Steal away from me the precious fires  
 Living here.

*Royce.* Peace, Dohlgrin! To say more is to  
 say too much.  
 We cannot take away this care of cares;

Add to it, we should not. (*Enter Dolora.*)  
There's his sister.

*Dohlgrin.* Oh, look not, Royce!

*Royce.* Ten times his heart must break and  
break at this!

*Esmund.* Oh, pity! pity! Thou hast not tears  
enough

To drown this spectacle. This is my sister!  
Where's despair can measure out my grief,  
And describe me full? When they have  
known

This too too sorry sight, mine eyes  
Have seen enough. Dolora, oh sweet sister!  
Speak to me! Say that you remember!  
Say that from your mind's rich coronet,  
The dearest gem, the radiant source-light  
Of the soul, has not been ta'en away.

(*Esmund removes mask.*)

*Dolora.* You speak to me, sir. What will you?

*Esmund.* I speak to you, Dolora, yet you know  
me not!

Friends, she knows me not!  
Is there no way to reach her complete soul  
Other than the transit of her mind  
Which now's obstructed with a thousand  
memories

Hopelessly confused?

*Dolora.* Faith, sir, I know you not, how can I?  
I do entreat you to let me pass. Frail things wither.  
The elm outlives a thousand lilies. The roses die  
before their colors go. Faith, faith, what's sweet is  
not lasting. But is not the poetry of the breeze  
sweeter than the music of the stormwind? Will  
you let me go? There will be feasting to-night

where everything is forgot. A few mad souls will wave their cups high in the air, and hosts and hosts, with pale and envious lips, who always dress the feast, will serve to them—look on, but never partake.

*Esmund.* What vast thoughts are there, raveled up!

*Dolora.* My duty's to my lord. Thither is my heart gone. I must follow. Why do they keep him from me?

*Esmund.* Alas, she loved him even to the doom of reason! Oh, why do the best of us forsake so soon the world, and leave it to the ravages of the rest?

*Dolora.* Ever have I loved him, but he was cruel, and led me to this.

*Esmund.* To this? To what! (*Clutches at her arm.*)

*Dolora.* Why do you hurt my hand? I know not to "what". Why do you frown upon me? Will you let the phrase mar the sentence? Who are you?

*Esmund.* Who am I! I! Oh, rather were thy poor lips sealed, *Dolora*, than yielding of such words. I am not wrong; *Melmoth* was the all-cause. (*To Royce and Dohlgrin.*) Do speak to her, my lords. Perhaps in you she may recall herself.

*Royce.* How do you, madam?

*Dolora.* Do! Do! Do! This is a world of fies. (*To Royce.*) Methinks I've seen you before.

*Royce.* Even madam; it was in your brother *Esmund's* company. You must remember.

*Dolora.* That was so long ago. Ah, so long ago!  
(*They adjust their masks.*)

*Enter Cedrielle.*

(*Perceiving Cedrielle.*) Why does she follow me? I know no rest nor peace. Fly boy, ho boy, now I must away. (*Esmund attempts to detain her.*)

*Cedrielle.* Do not detain her, my lord. She becomes ungentle when crossed. Let her go which way she pleases.—Was ever heart so tried?

(*Exit Dolora with Cedrielle, following.*)

*Esmund.* (*To Cedrielle.*) Madam, a while, I pray. Do you attend upon her?

*Cedrielle.* Yes, my lord, day and night.

*Esmund.* What is the temper of her weakness?

*Cedrielle.* She is given to wandering through the palace—

*Esmund.* Just so?

*Cedrielle.* In the hope that she may chance upon the king.

*Esmund.* Aha! You see, my lords?—

*Cedrielle.* But when within his sight, alarmed, she quickly hides herself, that he may not perceive her. Thus does she all day. At night, exhausted by her restlessness, she falls into a sleep which is neither sleep nor waking.

*Esmund.* I thank you. (*To Royce and Dohlgryn, hopelessly.*) Why, she is beyond recall!

*Cedrielle.* Were her brother here to speak to her—

*Esmund.* Nay, that's unavailing.

*Cedrielle.* Such things occur they say.

*Esmund.* So rarely that it but torments the hope wasted on it.

Who can renew a pattern of such excellence?

*Cedrielle.* But I must follow her, sirs, else she will come to harm. (*Exit.*)

*Esmund.* Oh, friends, at times life's worth a world,

And at times, not a throw's hazard. But what is't

That makes us cling to it even when sorrow Sits upon the heart and madness rends it?

I should be mine own deliverer,

Ending it all with this—(*Dagger.*) But there's a cause

Keeps me yet a while; that encompassed, Makes death slight. But to stand is to idle. I'll seek and find him now.

*Dohlgrin.* You need not; there he is himself.

*Esmund.* Where? Aha! Why has the first glance been denied me? (*Enter Melmoth and Pellas.*) What's now to live or to die? There's that will satisfy all longing. Villain! How have you killed my sister! O, I could drink thy blood, started by this minister of death, faster than thy wounds could spill it forth.

(*Royce, Dohlgrin and Esmund remove their masks.*)

*Pellas.* Treason, treason! Ho!

*Dohlgrin.* Old fool, be silent.

*Esmund.* You, great king, might have known that such an hour was sure. Come now. Rest your fortunes upon your sword. Make yourself terrible as the Bengal Cat, the Lernean hydra! Yea, be like the knotted oak, and I will run you thru the readier.

*Melmoth.* Esmund, put away your sword.

Knew you the futility of your threats  
You would' make less of them.  
Be undeceived. There is that strength in  
me,

Unclaimed by nature and so opposite to use,  
It could make mockery of a world.

Mercy was rarely mine.

If now 'tis time to show, be happy. Pellas,  
follow me.

*Royce.* Nay, then, we must oppose you.

*Dohlgrin.* First here, my lord.

*Pellas.* What more, still more?

*Esmund.* Villainy hath more than one justicer.

*Melmoth.* (*To Royce and Dohlgrin.*) You are  
his friends. I forgive your insolence as I forgive his  
charge. (*To Royce.*) You, sir, I have remem-  
brance of you. You do not honor my court so much  
of late.

*Royce.* The turbulent state of matters here and  
abroad have kept us keen on duty.

*Melmoth.* Excellent, excellent. Your wit should  
make you frown upon your age.

*Esmund.* An end! An end! Why do you  
measure words? There's nothing comes of that.  
Will you draw, or must I bear away with me the  
sin of murder?

*Melmoth.* Then there's choice not left to me  
but yield

The satisfaction you desire. I can almost  
Appreciate the election of the mind  
When it seeks to locate the germ  
Of its affliction here.

*Esmund.* Enough of words! My sword sweats  
in my hand!

The argument of the tongue is stale! I love  
the argument of arms.

(*Royce and Dohlgrin go to either door, and stand guard with drawn swords.*)

*Melmoth.* (*Draws.*) Is life so little that 'tis  
thrown away so carelessly? (*They join.*)

And life's possibilities, (*They fight.*)—greater—  
(*Fending.*) greater than death's promise,—a fume  
—a fume—blown away—thus! (*Hits Esmund, who falls.*)

*Royce and Dohlgrin.* Esmund, you are wound-  
ed. (*They run over.*)

*Esmund.* Nay, I am killed. Oh, friends, fare-  
well. (*Dies.*)

*Royce.* Farewell, sweet Esmund; woe survives  
thee!

*Melmoth.* He chose this hour from Time's great  
calendar

To be his last. He died himself. This  
world, (*Signifying Esmund.*)

With all its fond and cherished make-believes,  
Is at an end. It might have yet revolved,  
And yet be seen in its customary orbit  
But for this chance. 'Tis fallen now. It will  
No more be known, sung or thought of.

The promethean fire is out.

(*To Royce and Dohlgrin.*) You, sirs, his near-  
est friends, take up the body and give it grace. For  
your own selves, depart this kingdom in the free-  
dom of a day. Be well in mind of this. (*Exeunt  
Melmoth and Pellas.*)

*Royce.* (*To Esmund.*) Dear friend, farewell.

Dohlgrin cover him.

Lest the look within his fading eyes

Accuse us with their glassy stare.  
How stood we all composed to see our friend,  
Most dear to us, fall before our eyes!

*Dohlgrin.* Better to have stood aside than to  
have jumped

Upon a folly. Adieu! Adieu! Perhaps 'tis  
better so;

Who knows?

The shadow and largeness of his calamity  
Would from his spirit, ne'er have passed  
away,

Lived he yet.

*Enter Berkeley and Brabant, triumphantly.*

*Berkeley.* All hail, comrades, heaven smiles  
upon us most serenely! (*Suddenly.*) Royce! Dohl-  
grin! What have we here!

*Brabant.* (*Over Esmund.*) My God! Esmund's  
murdered!

*Berkeley.* Oh, say not so!

*Royce.* Alas, good friends, see but for your-  
selves.

*Berkeley.* Oh, most pitiful sight! How came  
this to be done?

*Dohlgrin.* He was slain most royally— by Mel-  
moth's hand. Nigh crazed by his terrible misfor-  
tune, Esmund came himself to seek revenge. This  
is the sad result.

*Berkeley.* There is a time for death. It was  
not now. For duty and past allegiance he should  
have lived to see his efforts crowned.

*Brabant.* Shall we take him hence?

*Royce.* Yes. Take him up. In all our hearts  
he shall remain a loving memory. And now—what  
news, Brabant?

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*Brabant.* To-night we must away; and while revelry is highest in the court, we leave Elsmere behind us, to return only with the prince.

*Curtain*

## ACT V

SCENE I.—*Dolora's Bedchamber. Dolora asleep. Discovered Margaret, Cedrielle and Physician.*

*Cedrielle.* Well, doctor?

*Physician.* The indications of her condition, as I see them, cannot belie their exact nature.

*Cedrielle.* Is there not a last hope for her recovery? I do beseech you.

*Physician.* No, madam.

*Cedrielle.* Nay, there must be, else you make the use of your art a thing to laugh at.

*Physician.* Madam, I am a physician. You need not urge your dissatisfaction at my advice to a point of disrespect. What is beyond my art, is beyond my power—consider that.

*Cedrielle.* Then cannot she be helped? Are you certain of it? Does faith go no farther than your salves and antidotes that strive into the flesh only, which knows not to resist? Is there no truer anodyne, no surpreme touch that can renew the mind? Indulge me but this hope.

*Physician.* I'm sorry, madam, I'm neither prophet nor wizard; then expect not of me to exert their extraordinary powers; you charge me too severely, ay, too severely! (*Going.*)

*Cedrielle.* If I do, be patient with me. Grief makes forget the courtesy of the tongue. But you, sir, speak rather in sympathy than like one who looks upon this failing flesh with the brave and unprevisory eye of science, and sees in all

matter, obedience to disease and remedy ; in all things, change and decay.

*Physician.* I can do no more than take away the pain when I have found the cause of it. Diseases of the body are known to me—these I can influence ; but diseases of the mind, when they are of such abstruse character, are peculiar to the understanding. They may, forsooth, be healed by conviction as those of the spirit by faith.

*Cedrielle.* Alas, sir, where is the power to endow her with faith or conviction when the power to accept either is gone?

*Physician.* Then, madam, if you are a believer, must you confide her to His wonders. Often have they occurred to embarrass the methods of science. On that behalf, we cannot say with certainty of anything, 'it is so', or 'this will be' or 'this or that must follow'. For sureness assured in a truth, may be rooted in error. The most practiced not infrequently go wide in their speculations ; yet for my own part, in the instance of our present patient, I cannot offer to encourage a hope for her recovery, feeling it to be ungrounded.

*Cedrielle.* Then God must show his mercy.

*Physician.* Amen. Amen. (*Goes out.*)

*Cedrielle.* Were there no miracles before this hour, there must be now. (*Walks over to the bed.*)

(*To Margaret.*) Has she yet stirred?

*Margaret.* Soon after you were gone, madam, she did toss about as in great pain. She moaned and muttered ; called up bits of conversation, scenes and names, which I could not make intelligible. Then she fell into a sleep, unbroken since. Do you think, madam, does her ailment give cause for

anxiety.

*Cedrielle.* Too much, too much, alas!

*Margaret.* How tended the words of the physician?

*Cedrielle.* They were unassuring, and left me less with hope than with sorrow.

*Margaret.* So ill?

*Cedrielle.* So hopeless ill. Were it but a tumor, a disorder of the blood, an affection of the heart—soft, she stirs!

*Margaret.* Do you think she will awaken?

*Cedrielle.* Perhaps 'tis her fever racks her so.

This may be her rest until the last.

Oh that her sleep were tranquil! and the pillow

Whereon her angel head is laid, less fevered  
With the dreams of him that has forsaken  
her.

Art thou the sweet Dolora, lying so low;  
The early flower that blithely followed  
Spring

Her briefest season?

Oh bitter world, that like the Minotaur,  
Appeases itself with the dearest and love-  
liest;

Or like hungry Cronus, devours the best  
Of its own creation.

*Margaret.* She wakes, madam.

*Dolora.* (*Awaking.*) Cedrielle?

*Cedrielle.* Sweet madam?

*Dolora.* Help me to raise myself. What hour  
is it, do you know?

*Cedrielle.* Near to evening, madam.

*Dolora.* So it is. How's your cheer?

*Cedrielle.* Little better than your own.

*Dolora.* Alas! alas! You should have a physician. Their drugs and simples can chide our blood into behavior. (*Observing Margaret.*) Who's this near me? Ill omens, again? So, so, I'm eager; prithee come here.

*Margaret.* It is only I, dear madam. Do you wish for anything?

*Dolora.* Boy, say to whom thou bringest news. Messengers, like coaches, oftentimes serve for the dead or the over-merry. I have not had a messenger so long, he's ancient in mine eyes. What have you there? (*To Cedrielle.*) What's the matter, why this puling? Why this taking on? If my eyes bear me true witness, Cedrielle, thine are moist.

*Cedrielle.* If thou wouldst understand my grief, dear friend, I would not need to grieve. Nothing, oh Dolora, nothing in the catalogue of great misfortunes should have attained to the wrecking of your life. Why was it so?

*Dolora.* Let me see the occasioner of your grief. 'Tis smoke, I bank, and will into the air. (*To Margaret.*) Here, boy, is thy reward.

*Margaret.* Harmony and discord both find a chorus here! Madam, do you know me?

*Dolora.* To forget is the saddest thing in the world, but what's sadder than to know that one must forget?

*Cedrielle.* Oh, woe is me!

*Dolora.* (*Mockingly.*) Oh, woe is me! Why do you confound me with your laments? You make my head to whirl. Why do you say that I am mad? I'll show thee. Bid me count the days of the week, the months of the year; bid me calculate; put to me

questions and problems that are known to perplex old men, and you'll receive most proper answer. Nay, I'll tell thee thy lover's name. (*In warning tones.*) Of him be cautious! Come here, by me.

(*Cedrielle and Margaret sit down on her bed.*) Lay his sword between you, when you lie at his side. Men will want thee till they get thee, and thou art nothing, when they have known thee. Do not cast yourself in the survey of men, for therein lies no safety.

*Cedrielle.* Thy wisdom comes too late, alas!

*Dolora.* The laws of love are so exacting! They rob us of our wisdom and our sleep and make the proudest of us, willing slaves.

*Margaret.* (*To Cedrielle.*) If this be madness, what quality is't we call reason?

*Dolora.* Fetch me my jewel-box.

*Margaret.* Your jewel-box?

*Cedrielle.* Make no ado, go get it. (*Margaret goes to drawer.*)

*Dolora.* So the world seems fashioned; they that comfort have no reward; they are dearest to us, we love them most, for whom we suffer and endure the most. (*Margaret returns with the jewel-box.*) The lustre of a jewel is in the eye; the fragrance of a flower is in the sense; music is sweetest when the heart is sad. (*Takes the box.*)

*Cedrielle.* Reason unreasonably uttered! What hope is there that shall sustain us now?

*Dolora.* This brooch was brilliant once; now, no more. When was it given me, do I recall? Take them away! Take them away! Jewels without memory are like thoughts without affection, friendship without duty, kisses without love; like

letters whose sender is forgotten.

*(Falls back upon her bed, exhausted.)*

Go, let me rest, let me rest. Let me sleep till all is unremembered and over. *(Sleeps.)*

*Margaret.* Madam, shall I go?

*Cedrielle.* Do, Margaret—of what fabric is my heart that it does not break? Margaret?

*Margaret.* Yes?

*Cedrielle.* Prepare what comforts have been prescribed. You have heard the physician?

*Margaret.* Yes, madam.

*Cedrielle.* Then go and make haste.

*Margaret.* Yes, madam. *(Exit.)* *(Cedrielle draws bed curtain.)*

*Enter Melmoth.*

*Cedrielle.* What, is Melmoth here!

*Melmoth.* Soft! Unbrace not unto this air a name

That must weight it down. Let her not hear it.

*(Turns to Dolora.)* I thought,

That though she came with blood upon her brow

Like an accusing angel, pointing upward,  
Asking why, I'd know her not.

*Cedrielle.* Oh, king, were thy name the very echo of these walls, and these echoes were alive, it would no more startle her from that slumber, fast sinking into the last. Once the thought of thee alone gave vital breath; now even thy semblance must be a perturbation to her sense. If you have come to triumph at this fall, be sure in that you've triumphed; for mischief never aspired to excellence above this. But if you come repentant, pause here

and weep. Yet should you turn the streams of all the world to salt, and that to tears, you will not have enough.

*Melmoth.* (*Shaking his head.*) Tears are not for great sorrows that make men silent.

Rather for the hurts and thousand ordinary pangs

That visit our lives.

'Tis the ready tear that fills a little grief  
And washes it away. But the best tear,  
As tribute to a deep and precious sorrow,  
Remains a debt. (*To Cedrielle.*)

I cannot weep.

Yet if I could, and tears contained my grief,  
They would overrun their swollen channels  
faster

Than these eyes could suffer them. But  
strong men

Must not weep howe'er the heart crack  
With exceeding emotion.

*Cedrielle.* What vessel so overcharged, does not spill itself? But no, your heart is the Aegean marble to which the melting rays of pity never penetrate. Approach on thy knees, king, if thou hast it in thy courage to approach her, as thou hadst it in thy heart to madden her.

*Melmoth.* Judge me, thou Great Innocence!

*Cedrielle.* Fools cry to heaven when they grow wise, and wise men when they grow foolish. Judge yourself, Melmoth, and you will know that your crime was great as it was terrible.

*Melmoth.* Ay. Greater it could not have been.

There was a time when I could paint my  
grief

In bitter moods, in heavy silence, in words,  
Sometimes, in tears. But now, there's nothing.

*Cedrielle.* Why have you come, then? Like the  
Vandal, to look upon the temple he has desecrated?

*Melmoth.* Ay, and to suffer looking at it.

*Cedrielle.* Then look till you are pale and sick  
at the thought of yourself. (*Draws aside bed-curtain.*)  
Look, till aught that's good in your small  
nature, is warped and shriveled up, and becomes  
afraid.

*Melmoth.* Oh that mine eyes were spared a sadder  
sight!

Sleep, Dolora, for in consciousness

Thou must despise me. Yet if thou wouldst  
know

Why Melmoth thrust thee from him when  
he craved

Thee most, and avoided thy dear presence

When, in avoiding thee, he bled his soul,

Neglectful of the point of death, thou

Wouldst be one in all this world to show  
him

Sympathy. (*Pause.*)

Oh where shall I find words half eloquent

Of my emotion! I can only speak, speak,  
speak,

Till the throat is dry and the tongue refuses  
me

Its function. (*Dolora awakes.*)

(*Melmoth hides his face.*)

Nay, nay,

Gaze not upon me with that innocence

Which pleads with mute and tender accusa-

tion.

Rather see the violence and the waste  
Within this vault, but that—that, thou canst  
not!

*Dolora.* We are not so fond as to take each man seriously. Kindness is folly. Wise men die, but fools never. Why hast thou come so late in the night, Melmoth?

*Melmoth.* Why have I awakened so late in the night, Dolora? Why did I fail the dawn? I looked to opposite shores, and stars that paled.

*Dolora.* Why hast thou forsaken me, Melmoth?

*Melmoth.* Why have I forsaken myself, Dolora?

*Dolora.* They say that sinners who repent are holier than the saints. He is better far. There's a lily on his brow and a lily in his hand. Why was the way so long, Melmoth? Why was the way so long?

*Melmoth.* (*Passionately.*) Oh, my Dolora!

If thou hadst power left for comprehension,  
And thy dear heart were stern as adamant,  
And I had words as mild as thy sweet bosom,  
That thou might'st hear a madman's tale, and  
live,

I would disclose to thee my bosom's secret.

(*Falls upon her bed.*)

*Enter Pellas and Officers.*

*Cedrielle.* What! Even in this sanctuary, sirs!

*Pellas.* Your pardon—

*First Officer.* What shall we do? The news is precious.

*Second Officer.* He should be instantly informed.

*Pellas.* My lords, be pleased to wait without. Trust me to acquaint him.

*First Officer.* Impress him with the immediate nature of our tidings. Report to him that rumors have come down to us by divers means, warning the rapid approach of John on Elsmere; that there is command for preparation.

*Pellas.* I will. (*Exeunt Officers.*) (*After hesitating—to Melmouth.*) My lord. (*No answer.*) My lord.

*Melmoth.* (*Rising from bed and turning desperately to Pellas.*) Pellas! Pellas!

*Pellas.* (*Confused.*) My lord,—the state's afire!

*Melmoth.* Let it burn! Let havoc come without as it has come within!

*Pellas.* I bid your grace—

*Melmoth.* Not here! Not here! Speak to me without—(*Turns appealingly to Cedrielle.*) Cedrielle—I'm on the breast of confusion. Oh, this hath no climax! It is the prelude to the end. And I could end it too, but that self-release, which disclaims the immortal spirit, makes nothing of great woe, and I would feed on it.

*Cedrielle.* (*Understandingly as Melmoth and Pellas go out.*) Oh, my gracious lord!

*Curtain*

SCENE 2. *A path in the King's Forest. Music and laughter are heard from the distance. Masqueraders passing.*

*Enter De Forest, Edwin and Steele.*

*Steele.* Our coming here to-night well-nigh amounts to an adventure. Set well your masks. Es-

mund's death may lead to our discovery.

*Edwin.* Were we less chivalrous—

*Steele.* You mean, were we less assinine—

*De Forest.* (*Abruptly.*) Were you less the fools, you would not speak of this now.

*Steele.* Humph.

*Edwin.* Humph.

*De Forest.* If we did assist in Esmund's liberation, we thought not of his death. No one knows of our part in the affair and 'twill be but through the folly of our own lips that any shall. He was our friend. 'Twas nothing wrong to aid him.

*Steele.* Henry's right, after all, eh, Edwin? We always held that regrets have long tails and small heads; in fact, they are miserable companions. I say, let us look rather to the promise of the evening and make merry.

*Enter other masqueraders, singing.*

*Edwin.* Here's a junket company, a full night, music and a Bacchanalian atmosphere.

*Steele.* And women, the dearest things on God's gay world!

*De Forest.* It seems to me, the spirit's taken the age by the horns.

*Steele.* Hear their shouts and laughter! It makes my heart young again.

*Edwin.* Romance never had a fitter dwelling-place than this.

*Steele.* La, sol, fa, me, do! If I could count my age by my gaiety, I would lose half my years. Come away, away.

*De Forest.* Bear memory of our costumes, Richard, else you'll lose us.

*Steele.* I'll know you more easily by your bellies,

which, alas, are so pretentious, they cannot help betray you. And as to losing you, dear Henry, that would indeed be too great a stroke of fortune. In truth, I cannot lose you.

*Enter several Courtiers, hastily.*

*De Forest.* What's the matter, friends? This festive night is not in harmony with your complexion.

*Steele.* (*To Courtiers.*) You should drain a cup to chase the pallor from it.

*Edwin.* But what's the matter? Tell us.

*Courtier.* The world should weep; alas, a fool is dead.

*De Forest.* Nothing else? There are so many of them living, we make nothing of them, dead.

*Second Courtier.* But this fool's found when he is lost. On the approach, a pretty distance away, we chanced upon the lifeless, self-handled body of the court jester.

*All.* What do you say?—Splinters?

*First Courtier.* None other.

*All.* How came he by his death?

*First Courtier.* Out of great respect for himself he hanged himself. We had him borne away to wait the evening's end, lest the news of his suicide interfere with the pleasures. Meanwhile we shall to the king to inform him of it.

*Masquerader.* Why did he hang himself?

*Another Masquerader.* Why do fools do things? Because they lack wisdom to let them alone. But in truth, I heard say, the king defied him to it.

*Third Masquerader.* On what account?

*Another Masquerader.* I'm unaware. There's

more annexed to this than we shall ever know.

*Fourth Masquerader.* Splinters was to be the life and spirit of this evening. Without him we cannot anticipate so much.

*Curtain*

SCENE 3. *King's Forest. Arranged for a Masque. Flowers strewn upon the ground. Varied colored lanterns hang upon the trees. Music is heard. Throne of flowers to right, front of stage. Discovered Masqueraders, dancing. De Forest, alone. Enter to him a Masquerader.*

*Masquerader.* De Forest?

*De Forest.* Oh, say, I am discovered!

*Masquerader.* What, alone in this gay company?

*De Forest.* Better than alone.

*Masquerader.* Then with your thoughts.

*De Forest.* Ay, but they are dreary fellows to-night.

*Masquerader.* Strange, for they are seldom so.

*De Forest.* More strange they are not ever so. The eye must be shut against the world that the heart may permit itself a pleasure.

*Masquerader.* You are morose. Where's the cause? I'd marvel not if I could find it there! (*Pointing to women in the crowd.*)

*De Forest.* This once you are at fault. How make you of this night, friend? Is there not something unreal about it all? Things over much leaning against things without construction? These colored lights, this fitful music, see, these moving figures, and then tragedy behind them, more

real than their lives—what does it mean? What shall we make of it? When the night is wasted, each creeps back to a stale and lonely bed, and thinks on the buried scene with that terrible emptiness of soul, which great events, the surfeit of unrealities, ever bring on. Even as on the stage, where the brilliants are glass; fire, paint; swords, tinsel; so here and so everywhere. In a little while these trees will again be joined to their quietude and not a solitary echo remain to tell of this night's dream. (*Pause.*)

*Masquerader.* Where's the profit of thinking when it grieves? Let wise men weep and fools enjoy their pleasures. Let us go thither.

*De Forest.* (*With abandon.*) Ay. Let's away into the swirl! We'll ride the bubble while 'tis blown to burst with it. Let the fretting world go hang, the furies take to-morrow.

*Masquerader.* We'll have our wine and song in spite of it. (*They mingle with the others.*)

*Enter Melmoth and Pellas.*

*Melmoth.* Let not my entrance interrupt the dance.

You have my welcome, all the company.  
See to the evening and its possibilities.  
Each follow out his own, and all in all,  
Unite to make it pleasant.

(*Dance is resumed.*)

(*Melmoth and Pellas go down stage—near to the throne.*) Pellas, I fear I am doomed.

*Pellas.* My lord, I fear I never understand you.

*Melmoth.* No. It is a deep doom that drags to beyond death, and there the unutterable com-

mencement, that puzzling state which lets not the wit of man. But I do hold it nothing. It is a fear, that being familiar with it, I am grown to neglect.

*Pellas.* I'm troubled much, I cannot understand you, nor the least of what you say. Ever is it thus: to my most direct questioning you give me answer in such special terms, it puzzles me. But one need not, I know, understand to sympathize.

*Melmoth.* Ay, one need not. Sympathy lives not in the understanding. It dwells in the ever widening circle of our lives and we around it. Erst-while I thought, that to feel with grief was to pity error. But I would err sweetly, time not in telling, if so 'twould bring me sympathy—that universal bond—or do whatever, if that earned more of it. Pellas, once I was strong; once there was a time when I could pit myself against all laws that nature cracks of, and yet prevail. Now I cannot even against the least of them.

*Enter several Courtiers. They approach Melmoth.*

*First Courtier.* My lord,—

*Melmoth.* Well?

*First Courtier.* We come with news of such a kind, we know not how you'll take it, well or ill. Ourselves are sad over it. Splinters is dead, and apparently by his own hand removed.

*Pellas.* Splinters, dead?

*Melmoth.* Strange was his life as the departing it. Had I true learning of the man in him, I were now less bitterly taught. (*To Courtiers.*) Where did you come upon his form?

*Courtier.* In his majesty's own forest.

*Melmoth.* That is so. Are there many days since this occurred?

*Courtier.* Earlier than yesterday, surely, or the day before.

*Second Courtier.* The body may have lain there several days, my lord.

*First Courtier.* Ay, perhaps three or four.

*Melmoth.* Stay now, stay now—three or four?

*Second Courtier.* Or five.

*Melmoth.* That's better. Always is death a reproach to memory; it wounds where it reminds. Living I could not conceive him so well as now. He failed not. He was a man, more normal in his nature, more noble in his madness, than many in their endurance. I loved him better than I knew. (*Clamor without.*) Who are those that come with such bold clamor to break up this night?

*Enter from up stage, in haste, St. Francis, Officers of the Army, and others.*

(*To St. Francis.*) What moral's in this noise beside your own?

*St. Francis.* (*Holding up a paper.*) My lord—

*Melmoth.* When I would be away from the tumult of the world, the hang and shift of affairs—

*St. Francis.* (*Flaunting the paper.*) My lord!

*Melmoth.* They come upon me with contracts, forms, demands and such formalities—instruments devised for one another's harm—that they draw upon my patience. What will you?

*St. Francis.* My lord, we almost envy words the time we waste on them. Now there is no tarrying. Fate waits without our very walls. The base Pretender, re-enforced with squadrons of the Austrian and Prussian armies, lingers expectantly on the

break of next day's morn. The moment's now that we must up in arms.

*Melmoth.* Be contained St. Francis. I am indifferent to your tidings.

*St. Francis.* Indifferent, my lord! Mistake me not. I grieve to think that at this high impending hour, when I should have your confidence in matters of the state, you take my purpose wrongly.

*Melmoth.* Do not speak to me! Let matters be as near and dark as doom, such is my mood, I'll not concern myself. The night is given over; let nothing mar it!

*St. Francis.* Nothing mars it more than this reply. (*To Officers.*) This is sheer madness, my lords.

*Melmoth.* (*Warningly.*) Oh, Francis, the gods you serve are false. Hurl them down to the dust whence they've sprung.

*St. Francis.* You jest, my gracious lord. But what a pretty time for banter!

*Melmoth.* Francis, beware!

*St. Francis.* (*Turning to those about him.*) Comrades, ho!

*Pellas.* Francis, thou pursuest hotly thine own perdition!

*St. Francis.* Fie upon it all! Father you are dull! See how the varying moods of kings will plunge a world into ruin! Another day and we shall have the Prussian gonfalons flaunted to our faces, and Elsmere's auriflame, a bedraggled rag for some proud Prussian cocks and traitor-knaves to spit upon. But we'll not stand and wait to see the assailing wave burst our dikes, rush in and overwhelm us. (*To Masqueraders.*) Off with your

masks! Fling them away to the winds whose idleness was but now in harmony with your own. This is no time for play! Lovers of Elsmere, follow me! Yet to-night, we'll see our lines arrayed for defense. Our Country labors in her final pain—to live or to die! (*Going, and suddenly turning.*) Father, you stay behind?

*Pellas.* Francis, you step upon your honor. If you go thus away, bear my curse away with you!

*St. Francis.* Rest sure, father, I'll not fall by 't. And as for him,—life and liberty are dearer to us than many times that king. (*All go out but Melmoth and Pellas.*)

*Melmoth.* Pellas, of what quality is thy son?

*Pellas.* My lord, I'm punished in him. There is no quality that he had not, but all were so perverted, that now one cannot tell the original good in him. He was instructed well, my lord, but his nature opposed.

*Melmoth.* How evenly does the little world shadow forth the greater! (*Satan appears dimly.*) What masquer is that that tarries? Did they not go—all of them?

*Pellas.* Ay, all. I see no one. Where, my lord?

*Melmoth.* He is familiar. Nay, I know him. Death to my soul!

*Pellas.* There's no one here, my lord. See for yourself. 'Tis your mind's survey of its own imaginings—nothing else.

*Melmoth.* He remembered to come. But why so ragged, so meagre, so unattractive? I like him not. He might have come in purple robes, a crown upon his head, a victor! He might have pleased me; he might have drawn upon the eye and still

engaged a fancy; but he is nothing now. The cap is beggarly; the plume droops. Yet for this, I scaled the world and mounted stars!

*Pellas.* Mad! Mad! Alas!

*Melmoth.* Ay, I know him well. Coming, he comes well-timed. This is the unheroing of my ambition, the fortunate collapse. Go, Pellas, give space to my sight that I may see him only.

*Pellas.* (*As he goes out.*) Mad! Mad! (*Satan appears more distinct and approaches Melmoth.*)

*Satan.* Well, Melmoth, we meet again.

*Melmoth.* Ay, but this is another day, Satan.

*Satan.* Yet it seems to me, looking upon you (*Pauses and regards Melmoth.*) that the period of time which has elapsed between our last meeting and this, has wrought no change. You are the same.

*Melmoth.* To say so is to reveal your disappointment.

*Satan.* Still misfiguring yourself! Melmoth, when will you awaken?

*Melmoth.* 'Tis *you* that sleep to my awakening. My resurrection is come! 'Tis here; 'tis all about me. I feel it in every living fibre of my frame. In trying to further the evil in me, Satan, you have brought forth the good. But tell me, why have you come to-night? To spare me another effort?

*Satan.* Where's your once-devouring ambition, Melmoth?

*Melmoth.* I have flung it from me. Ambition's for a time.

*Satan.* (*Mockingly.*) So it is, things of sweep and altitude you drag down to the low level and base of your despair, and in that moment, fail. Ha,

ha. Well then, the time is come when we must reach an understanding.

*Melmoth.* (*Calmly.*) I am satisfied.

*Satan.* Not sorry?

*Melmoth.* No, in faith, not sorry.

*Satan.* Except for yourself, of course.

*Melmoth.* No, no, not for myself even. I could not ever say that I was happy. I say it now, with the whole solid mass of this world melting like a shadow before me. But tell me, is it really so long we have not met? I forget, Satan, I forget. How long? A week? A month?

*Satan.* Longer, longer, Melmoth.

*Melmoth.* But there is feeling that I've seen and spoken to you often times before.

*Satan.* Your sick imagination, Melmoth; your fear of me.

*Melmoth.* Nay, nay, it is not that. Once indeed I feared you, but with the coming of conviction the fear of you has left me.

*Satan.* Then, Melmoth, you have forgotten what awaits you beyond.

*Melmoth.* I have not. But the light opened up to my soul will equate whatever chastisement written out for me. The other light—the thing unattainable for which I craved, I crave not. Yet even were I strong enough to make of it demand, you could not answer me. This you were careful to conceal; and I was foolish to believe that any of your tribe could give of Knowledge and Power. For truly, 'tis Heaven's alone. Satan, in your triumph, I triumph with you, since in losing to you, I have found myself. The power of evil has revealed to me the power divine. I have learned that

there is more to this life than the merely living it. I've realized the strength and beauty of the human soul; discovered in the lowest, in the most aberrant of nature, the spark divine. But mistake not to think, Satan, that I see you other than what you are: the unhappy maker and minister of evil, who, in the agony of his consciousness, must know that all his efforts to destroy shall be as futile as the ambitions of man; who must know that, on the tablet of the universe, blood and fire write out his eventual doom.

*Satan.* Who are you that thus in this easy manner accuse me? You, the groveling, hungering figure of a man that, for the Monarchy of Self, made great Satan create for him a world which he might rule and abuse. You speak to me thus! You, who for the satisfaction of a whim would roll together the heavens like a scroll and throw it into the flames.

*Melmoth.* Enough, Satan! This was I once. This am I no more. I have shuffled off the old coil.

*Satan.* Ha, you pass it off so slightly? Do you purposely forget the consequence of your self-enslavement—the unnumbered misdeeds that trail from your first acts to the end of age? See, you have waged war, incited vengeance, encouraged crime, murdered, and killed with weapons other than mortal. But most were you abandoned, when in the extreme of greed you strove against and lost the thing you loved.

*Melmoth.* All that is passed; it cannot be again. If I have left traces of crime behind me, by heaven, they shall be cancelled. For I have risen to that glorious height where I can find it in my heart to

regret and feel redeemed.

*Satan.* That hardly clears you. But, in truth, Melmoth, we've played so long together, I've grown quite fond of you. Perhaps we may yet do a little business. Who can tell? While Satan lives and Melmoth lives, and there's a world between them—

*Melmoth.* I have done.

*Satan.* Done? To-day we are sure, fast, firm, and formidable. To-morrow we are weak again.

*Re-enter Pellas.*

*Pellas.* Your majesty, I bring sad news of the Lady Dolora. She is dead.

*Melmoth.* Her end is the end indeed! I could almost wish all the events, from the first beginning, to roll back again to the tangled hours of yesterday, for her sake alone. Once more to see her, and that the last.

*Satan.* Your crown, your sceptre, your royal robes, my lord—

*Melmoth.* Drag them to hell with you. (*They go out.*) (*Satan looks after them.*)

*Curtain*

SCENE 4. *Prince John encamped before the walls of Elsmere. Camp fires are burning along the line. Lights seen from the city. It is still night, but gradually dawning.*

*Discovered Dohlgrin and Brabant.*

*Dohlgrin.* This morning air fills one to the breadth

Of living. It hath not in it withal  
The lazy energy of the sun

That comes on noonday. Brabant,  
I know not why I am so confident  
Of this day's outcome. It is as if  
The battle had already been decided,  
The vict'ry ours, and John upon the throne.

*Brabant.* So I feel; so do we all. The spirit  
Of success is that high among our men,  
It puts out to the last enduring flame  
The witching fires of doubt. How is it?  
Will Melmoth come into the field? If he  
does—

*Dohlgrin.* I doubt it very much. His manner  
From the very first indicated  
That pure indifference to his own as well  
As t' Elsmere's fate, there's no expecting him.

*Brabant.* Then I know one who'll lead the  
lines to-day.

*Dohlgrin.* That one we hope to meet.  
Him is it only to oppose, and him we'll silence  
Even to the last lap of memory,  
That trace of one so irreclaimable  
Be lost with his death.

*Brabant.* If he dare come—

*Dohlgrin.* But he will, Brabant; this is the pink  
Of his deep and delicate manoeuvring:  
To press Elsmere to resistance, and make  
This quarrel his own.

*Brabant.* Pray God, 'twill be his last, then.

*Dohlgrin.* The first should have been his last.

I know Francis.

His virtues are so small they're eaten up  
By his multiplying vices, which  
Alone remain. So, in this stand,  
Bayed by fear of the contingency,

Like a cat, he will desert his cowardice,  
And spring into the face. More than one  
life

Should be his that justice may at all  
Be satisfied.

*Enter from tent John, Royce, Berkeley and others.*

*John.* Look, Royce, how innocent now is the  
scene

So possible of the direst.  
There the soldiers lie, fully accoutred,  
As though slain with sleep. Even the daunt  
Of new or immediate encounter  
Cannot take away the peace from their slum-  
ber.

(*To Dohlgryn and Brabant.*) Good friends,  
you come to greet me early.

*Dohlgryn and Brabant.* Good morrow to our  
Prince.

*Dohlgryn.* Has intelligence of the enemy come  
down to us?

*John.* We await the final word. But, my gen-  
erals,

Make glad your hearts. No greater victory  
Attended our winning. Dark civil strife  
As by the last reports we may construe  
Dulls Elsmere's appetite for an engagement.

*Royce.* All's fair.

Ere the heavens bring on another day,  
Our dreaded eagle, fierce with victory,  
Shall screeching fly above yon battlements  
Where Arnheim's banners will anon be hung,  
To hang always.

*John.* These words, encouraging of the fairest,  
Commend themselves to our hearts.

*Enter soldier in haste.*

(*To Soldier.*) What now? What have you to report?

*Soldier.* Your grace, the armies of the enemy have sallied forth. They come upon us in three divisions, mainly from the east.

*John.* Sound the alarum! How do they number, do you know? (*Exeunt several officers.*)

*Soldier.* Full ten thousand strong, if judgment be not erring.

*John.* Who commands? Who bears the bloody ensign?

*Soldier.* The Marquis of Lode.

*Royce.* St. Francis, my lord.

*John.* 'Tis time, then, to set our battles on. Array the lines. Give the order to retreat. We'll afford them an advance. (*General commotion.*) (*To officers.*) How are you, my lords?

*Some.* More than eager.

*Brabant.* The high hour we waited for so long  
Has come at last to make us jealous  
Of its every moment.

*John.* For this, my friends, I owe you better than thanks. Elsmere shall live again in us.

*All.* And we in her.

(*Exeunt marching. Drum and colors.*)

SCENE 5. *The same.*

*Enter St. Francis, Toussan and armies. A royal scribe.*

*St. Francis.* My royal scribe, let this be noted well;

That full against our will do we now place

The stake of all this glorious dominion  
 Upon the hazard of a single fight.  
 This too forget not; that all unaided,  
 Wholly discountenanced by our traitor king,  
 We still have nobly dedicated ourselves  
 To save our country from the unwarranted  
 claim

Of the Pretender. Whate'er result,  
 Posterity shall know and praise our deed  
 Till another like it will applaud  
 The echo of this. And if we fail,  
 There'll be ourselves to blame, none others.

*(Sounds of drums, from a distance.)*

They're coming on! Mount courage on  
 your arms, my men,  
 And make your hearts the whetstone of your  
 blades.

Throw your shields before you.

We'll fight them till our limbs are hacked  
 to pieces,

And life's a jest. Set on your arms.

Toussan, ho! Why do the villains halt?

*Toussan.* My gracious lord, their pennons are  
 being lowered, mark.

It is a sign they would hold parley.

*St. Francis.* Stand well about me. I mistrust  
 their ways.

They are men only in times of peace;

War leaves no room for honor.

*(They stand about him.)*

Now let them come on.

*Enter John and army.*

*John.* I had hoped to find a worthier adversary.

*St. Francis.* *(Scornfully.)* Worthier must have

worthy.

Were I not thy better in all additions,  
I'd now be where those dark sons of the  
kingdom

(*Signifying Berkeley, Brabant and Royce  
and Dohlgrin.*)

Are fawning like dogs about you.

*John.* I grudge the patience that suffers you this  
liberty

Of further speech.

*St. Francis.* Grudge me not. I'll speak no extra  
words.

My sword hath a readier tongue.

There's more condition in a single stroke

Then in a tide of unfledged words.

Will you fight?

*John.* Peace, henchmen!

If thou hast courage to fight this out alone  
Within the sight and witness of both our  
armies,

Stand forth from the shelter of those men;  
There is no need to shed much costly blood,  
Since you have made this quarrel all your  
own,—

It boots nothing for Elsmere or her king.

*St. Francis.* Liar! My price is not a crown.

Let those lips rot that vomit forth such  
calumny! (*Armies prepare to fight.*)

My voice is the general, and my answer in  
these swords.

(*Armies join in battle, as curtain goes down.*) .

*Curtain*

174 MELMOTH THE WANDERER

SCENE 5. *Room in the castle; draped in black. Tester to one side.*

*Enter two servants with candles.*

*Peter.* Alas, alack, O woe, O well-a-day, Philip!

*Philip.* Well, a day, well a day, Peter. Spare me your tears, Peter. There's more to be cried over in the matter of one's life than by one's death. Therefore it is said, only fools make ado when their fellows drop away. When we begin to think, Peter, o' the many that sleep beneath the sod, and "pari passu," o' the many that sleep above it, one death or life, or a thousand deaths or lives, is verily a little matter, for in the great throng of things it is passed over like an old year. Just think, Peter, there are men, nations and languages, thoughts, actions and accomplishments, co-eval with us, and yet, so unrelated are they to our needs, they do not even exist to us! I tell thee what, Peter, and hold those words to your heart. This world is gone to the hang. Old men live till they fall in love again, and youth is cut off in the cradle. When such as haven't yet known the tip-taste of life, make themselves a grave, there's no dignity in being old any more. For my part, if I hadn't come to these two-score and ten I'd have stopped at thirty.

*Peter.* Ay, Philip. But this woman was known to have been a queen; a virgin, God rest her soul! A lady of description, no ordinary thing!

*Philip.* Therefore, Peter, should we make the more of her! Death is as real to one as to the other, and there are a sad many of quality, equally choice, that go down to their silence, unsung. You say this Dolora was a virgin, a lady, a queen, if

you will have it. She died. Sad, she died. But how many of your brothers' sons are even now kicking their last on the battlefield within easy distance of this castle. You make no moan at that. The death of one near to us is' the loss of a world, but the loss of an actual world—the report of thousands dying, will not dull our appetites. I say, dying's become the comedy and living the other thing.

*Peter.* How came she to die, Philip, do you know?

*Philip.* Peter, Peter, who can know the loads that hang about the souls of such as toy with sceptres or deal in high intrigue? A simple life merits a simple death. I'll give thee a plain coffin, Peter, and you'll not haunt me. Rich men balk even after they're laid away. My marquis such-a-one would have a catafalque, and trimmings, and jewels, and fineries; chaplets, wreaths, and a splash of ceremony! He would have a procession to follow him, hymns to be sung after him, mass to be said over him, and rhetoric to be flouted about him—and what not besides! Else he'll not rest easy. But lay to it, Peter, Peter, you'll sleep as sound and as snug as he, and turn not once over.

*Peter.* (*Dubiously.*) Humph! I'll not gain-say you.

*Philip.* But for all that, this is a sad time indeed.

*Peter.* Alas, alas, it is. She was a sweet lady.

*Enter Melmoth.*

*Philip.* Set 'em down; set 'em down. Me-thinks we are observed. (*They set down the candles.*)

*Melmoth.* What shall adorn the tomb that does

not life?

Flowers, habit, tears, respect, what?  
Why these candles? Their superstitious  
light

Hath that strangely-sown virtue in it,  
It makes all things within the radiance  
Of its hollow beams, suggestive and dim.

*Peter.* Yet we need them, my lord, to make  
death seem more serious, for the pathos of life takes  
away the sting from mortality.

*Philip.* That's true, my lord. Death's the easier  
of the two, and most when the tire of things, comes  
on.

*Melmoth.* What is your part in this event?

*Philip.* We are mourners, my lord, with the rest.

*Melmoth.* Is it still in you to mourn, good  
friends? Has not death, to whose form you are  
accustomed, having attended upon it so often, lost  
its seriousness for you?

*Peter.* Our hands, my lord, are indeed become  
cold to the touch of the dead, but we are men.

*Philip.* Great sorrow in our own lives, makes  
us blink at others.

*Melmoth.* What sorrow, friend, was in thine,  
that you do speak?

*Philip.* A death, my lord.

*Melmoth.* Death? That's mere.

*Philip.* A death of the spirit, my lord!

*Melmoth.* Ah!

*Philip.* I was a poet once.

*Peter.* A painter, I.

*Philip.* (*With sincerity.*) But there was one  
that mocked at my endeavors—

*Peter.* And flouted mine.

*Philip. (Vehemently.)* Who disclaimed the beauty of our creations, and destroyed their truths! Who took upon himself to judge the eternal! Matched art with years, and named all, futile! Who brought on sorrow, pain and disappointment; blighted dear hopes, sweet fancies and life's dream; crossed our years and destinies, (*Sadly.*) that we no longer live.

*Peter.* You gave us gold, my lord, but that was squandered.

*Melmoth. (Realizing.)* O, look not at me, friends! Can I be he that's wronged you, myself, and all the world so cruelly? No more, no more! Alas! How necessary are your dreams, great men! For they alone are real and enduring! Oh, what further beauty has my life betrayed? What things will yet arise to make my final years a tribute to sorrow? Oh, look not at me, masters.

*Peter.* See, he repents. The prophecy of my picture is fulfilled; he is now as I once painted him—noble.

*Enter funeral procession.*

*Melmoth.* They bring her here. I do not feel her death  
So much now, as I had thought to do.  
For with it, life's caught;  
The globe of a thousand passions comprehended;  
And the fear of things unknown and undiscovered,  
Together with the unnatural craving for them,  
Has passed away completely.

(*Coffin is placed on the tester.*)

*Enter Courtier to Pellas.*

*Courtier.* My lord, St. Francis, your son, is dead.

*Pellas.* You tell me nothing, sir. He made his bed as rude as that he'll lie in. Had he died honorably, he might have lived in my heart. I think no more of him. (*Perceiving Melmoth.*) This is sorrow, indeed. Here's our sometime king and noble lord. (*Approaches Melmoth.*) My liege, the fates have contrived to make this hour the most. The rule of the kingdom's transferred; her chronicles, henceforth, shall be written by other hands than ours.

*Melmoth.* This is a proper consummation.

Life and death, and life and death again.

The universe of matter and of soul

Is bound up in a perfect harmony.

Nature's overmastering!

Not an atom, moving, but it affects

The uttermost star.

A breeze that blows; a wave, beating on the  
shore,

Echoes through all eternities of space!

A spirit mighty with the voice of millions,

Calls upon me irresistibly

And bids me to be calm.

Never was my soul more tranquil than this—

The moment of its resignation.

(*Stage fills with soldiers, officers and Captains of the army.*)

But I am glad;

The vision's from the tangled skein brought  
forth.

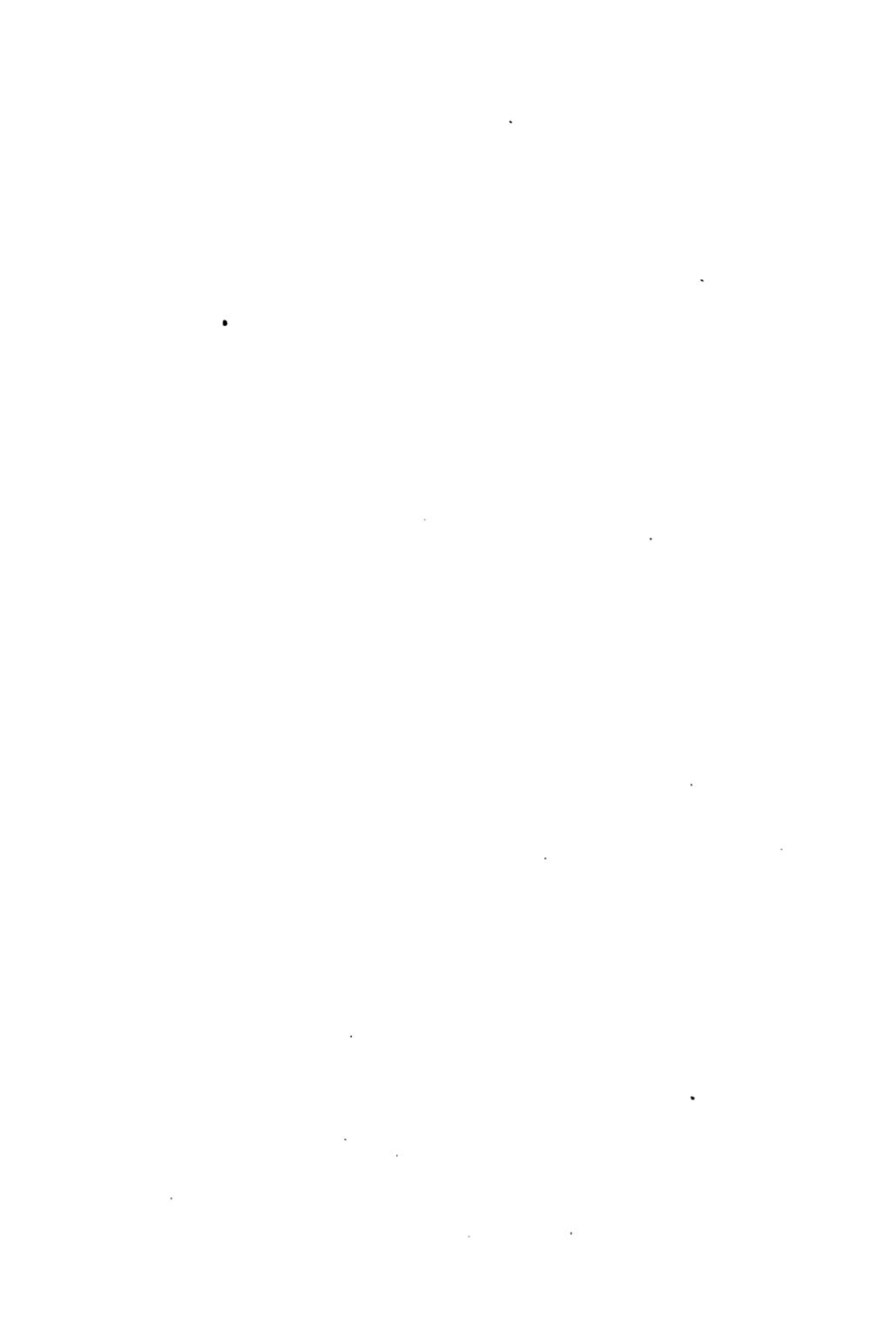
Truth shines on me like a calm star,

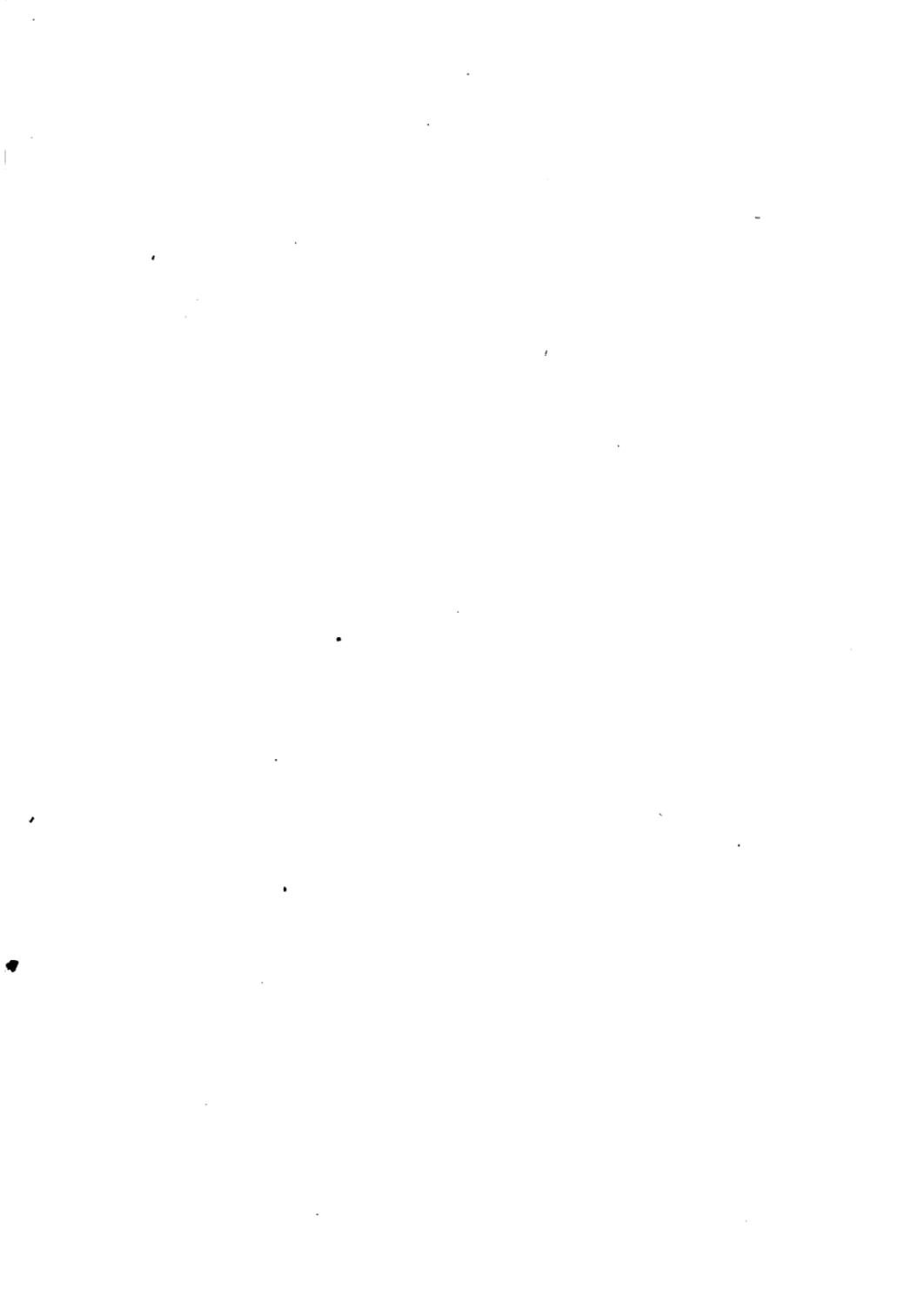
Set in the night; in whose light I shall follow

And pass away.

*(All stand motionless and gaze after Melmoth as he goes out.)*

*Curtain*





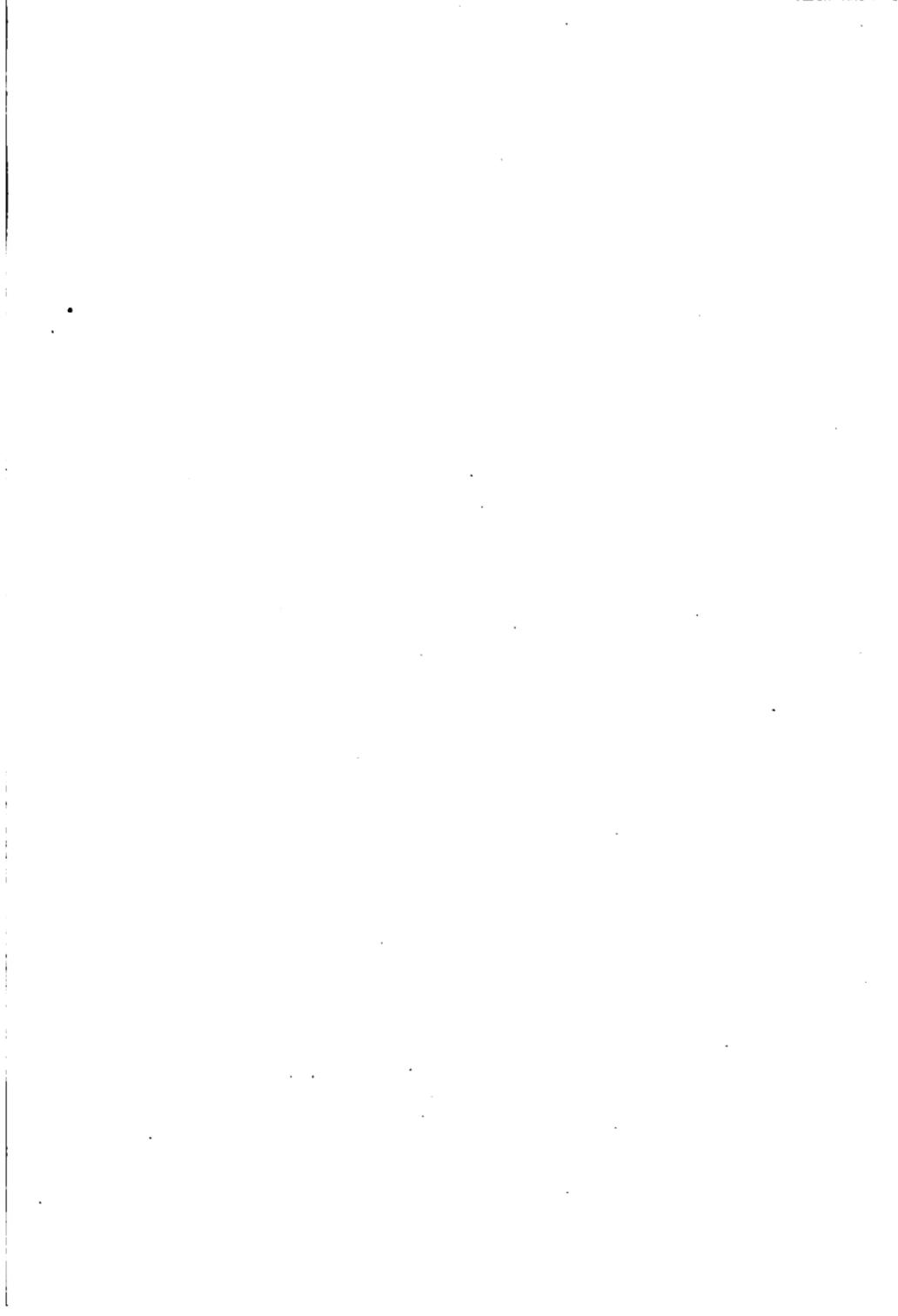
















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